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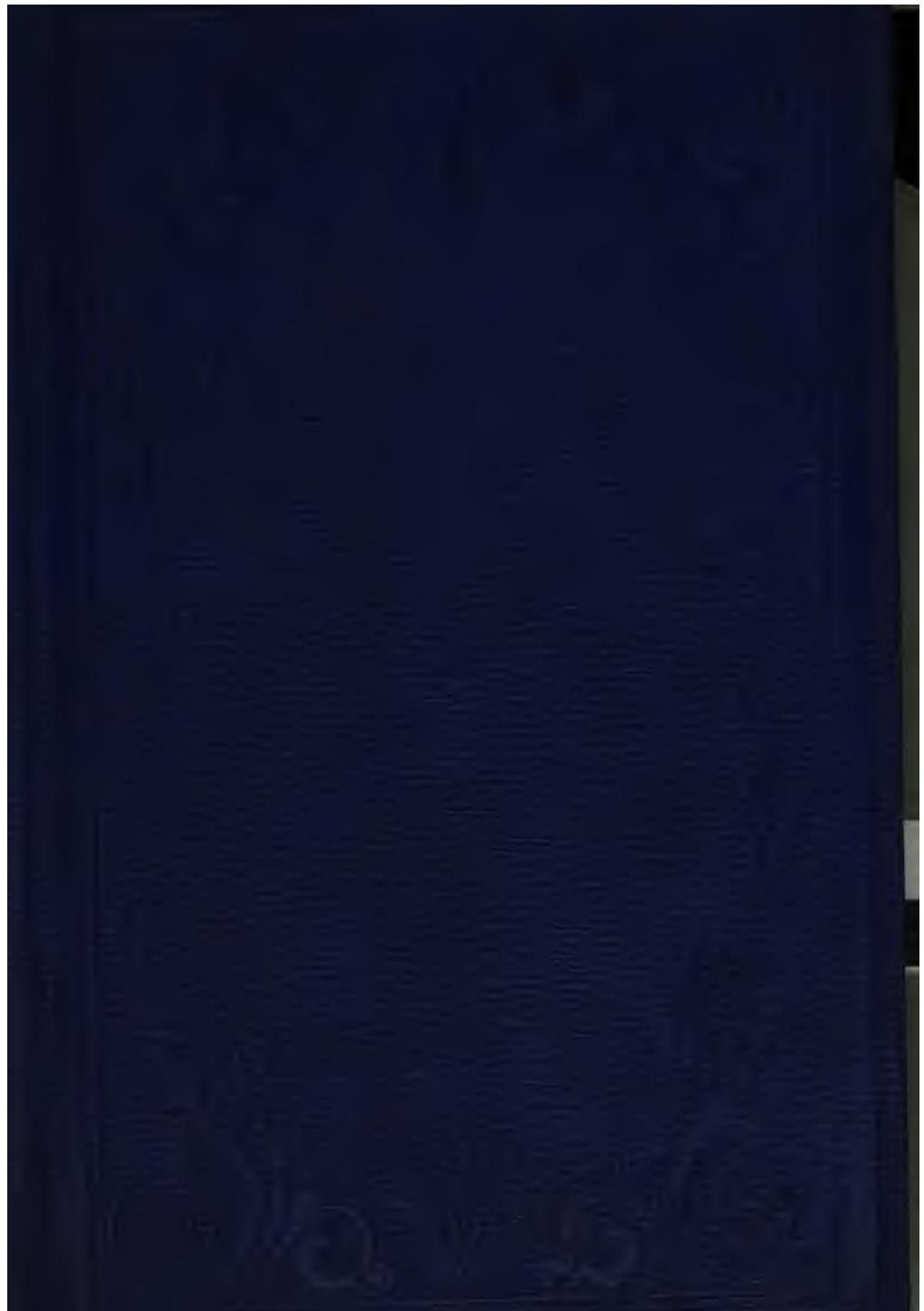
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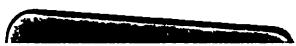
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DEARFORGIL: THE PRINCESS OF BREFNEY.

A HISTORICAL ROMANCE

OF

1152-1172.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE LAST EARL OF DESMOND.

"Such is the variable and fickle nature of women, by whom all mischiefs in the world (for the most part) do happen and come, as may appear by Marcus Antonius, and by the destruction of Troy."—*Giraldus Cambrensis*.

LONDON:
J. F. HOPE, 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1857.



249. W. 514.

C

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

GEORGE WILLIAM FREDERICK,

EARL OF CARLISLE, K.G.,

ETC., ETC.,

LORD LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR,

AND

GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND,

BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

GEORGE WILLIAM FREDERICK,

EARL OF CARLISLE, K.G.,

LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

To dedicate to the Queen's Representative in Ireland, a work treating of its conquest, has somewhat the appearance of bearing laurels to the feet of the conqueror. Such is far from my intention. The Norman Conquest of Ireland redounded but little to the honor of either country. I never much admired the character of Henry the Second, of England, nor his contract with Pope Adrian, for the subjugation of Ireland ; but cannot, on the other hand, subscribe to the lines of our great national Poet, that

“ On *our* side is *virtue* and *Erin*,
On *theirs* [i.e. *yours*] is the *Saxon* and *guilt*.”

The Poet in his Irish patriotic, and poetical furor, forgot that the song in which he thus lauds Irish *virtue*, contains the Prince of Brefney's lament for the unfaithfulness of his wife, Dearforgil :—

“ I flew to her chamber—’twas lonely,
As if the lov’d tenant lay dead.
Ah! would it were death, and death only!
But no, the young false one had fled!”

But your Excellency has special claims to the honor and esteem of literary men, who hail you as a friend and brother. I heard with great pleasure of your Lordship’s recent election, as a member of the Royal Irish Academy. The title M.R.I.A. is among the highest honors Ireland has to bestow. I also rejoiced to see your name on the roll of the Kilkenny Archæological Society, which promises to do much for Irish literature.

The Irish literary lore, or *ore*, brought to the surface by labourers in connexion with these, and other kindred societies, is immense, and increasing in value every year. The deeper we dig the purer we find the metal. But it strikes me, that it has been allowed to lie, and accumulate at the mouth of the shaft, too long ; until it has become a large, rich, and heterogeneous mass. It should ere this have

been brought into the market, put into circulation, and placed in the hands of skilful artificers.

The Papers of these Societies are circulated among the members *only*. They are full of interesting and important matter, well calculated to illustrate Irish History, or adorn Irish Romance, but in its present shape, it is not likely to be popular, or generally useful.

I have worked up, as your Excellency will perceive, by a reference to the foot-notes of this volume, a large portion of this unwrought material. Whether I have succeeded in rendering it more attractive, than in its original state, is a question for others to decide.

I have long held the opinion, (which I have expressed elsewhere) that there are periods of history, which can only be read with interest by the light of Romance. But there is a difficulty in so arranging the light and shade, as to bring out the more prominent features of the principal historical characters.

History, to change the figure, is a slow and steady-going coach horse. Fiction is wild and frolicsome, and apt to curvet in harness. But these two are yoked together in the modern *machine*, called a Historical Romance. It is the object, or art of the charioteer, to make them draw kindly, and keep their paces. History will not be over-driven, for

“facts are *stubborn things*,” nor will Fiction brook too tight a rein, or strong a curb.

I have often experienced this difficulty, in directing the course of my story; and have been compelled, more than once,—and most unwillingly,—to descend from the “box,” and sometimes to turn from a lovely picturesque road, (because History, forsooth, sulked, or stood stock still), to the narrow and dry ways of facts and figures.

I am not aware, that in any matter of the slightest importance, I have misrepresented any one of the great events or characters of the period, of which my story treats.

But let me think—yes, there is one most important point,—*the age of my heroine*—in which my prepossessions—shall I call them—do not harmonise with the statements of Doctor O’Donovan, one of the most eminent Irish antiquarians that ever lived. The Doctor is disposed to add to the lady’s age more years than become her sex, or suit the high position in which I have placed her, as the Heroine of Romance. The fact is, nothing but ancient articles take the fancy of antiquarians.

In a former work, “The Last Earl of Desmond,” I ventured to add a few years to a young lady’s age, but this the young lady herself would forgive, as it put her into her teens, and hastened her marriage.

But the present is a far more serious affair, for the Doctor makes the lady—let me see—I forget the exact figure. It is no matter.

For myself, I have made it a rule, (which I consider a safe one), never to inquire too curiously respecting ladies' ages, and I adopt the same policy respecting the Heroines of Romance.

But to the matter in dispute. Not only does the Poet Moore, (a very high authority where *ladies* are concerned), in the lines we have already quoted, call Dearforgil—

“The *young* false one.”

but the Four Masters, (vide A.D. 1155), state, that her brother, Melaghlin, King of Meath, who died “of a poisonous drink,” three years after his sister’s flight, was but *thirty** years of age, at the time of his death. Now, as his sister, in fleeing from her cruel husband, *acted under the advice of her brother*, (vide Annals of Clonmacnoise, A.D. 1152,) we may conclude that he was her senior, by a few years, at least. It is a well established fact, that where a girl is one or two years older than her brother, she

* I find I have made a mistake in Chapter xxi., page 108, where I represent Melaghlin, King of Meath, as saying (three years before his death) that he was “thirty-five.” If he died A.D. 1155, “in the thirtieth year of his age,” he could have been no more than twenty-seven in A.D. 1152.

takes the whip hand of him ; that he acts under her advice. In an *affaire de cœur*, she would never think of consulting a *younger* brother.

I hope I have succeeded in establishing this delicate point, in the lady's favor. If not, I would most respectfully enlist your Lordship's sympathy, and appeal to the chivalry of your noble nature, to aid me in breaking a lance, with this learned Doctor, in honor of Erin's Fairest Daughter.

Hoping, that it may be the privilege of all Irishmen, and Irishwomen, to enjoy, for very many years, the wise and impartial administration of a nobleman, distinguished by so many high attributes of head and heart, I beg to subscribe myself, with the greatest respect,

Your EXCELLENCY'S

Most obedient,

Humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

*Trinity Cottage, Monkstown,
February, 1857.*

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are periods of history which can only be read with interest by the light, or illumination of Romance. Mr. Hallam, speaking of the Visigoths, says, “I hold the annals of barbarians, so unworthy of remembrance, that I will not detain the reader by naming one sovereign of that obscure race.”

But Diarmaid, the hero of our tale, was neither Goth nor Barbarian. He flourished in the twelfth century, and was the cotemporary of Henry II. of England. But it requires the magic power of the Wizard of the North, to call up the heroes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the rapid and careful pen of a Bulwer, to sketch the features of those warlike kings and chiefs, as they pass swiftly through the pages of history, or lie stiff and shrouded in the annals of the age; for they are all alike, fierce in aspect, and blood-begrimed.

These marks of brutality and blood, which would cause any one of these men to stand out prominently on the page of modern history, were too common at this period, to create surprise, or give distinction: it is the high and calm brow of an Alfred, or the mild face of a Confessor, which appears singular at this epoch, and makes the principal figure in the picture.

But women—God bless them—always make pretty pictures, and Dearforgil, our heroine, was supremely beautiful. She is the

Helen of Irish History. To this lady's abduction, all our historians and poets, from Maurice Regan, to Tommy Moore, attribute the downfall of Ireland. If we are to *believe* them,

“The fruit of this forbidden tree
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of” *Erin*.

The Norman Conquest of Ireland, under Henry II. did not take place till a hundred years after the conquest of England, by William I. Whether it was that *our* iniquities were not then full—England is a century before us in every thing—or that we were unworthy of a Norman king till 1172, will depend altogether on the view taken of the conquest.

Camden, in his Itineary, describes the English Conqueror William I. as standing on the high cliffs of Wales, which command the Wicklow mountains, in Ireland, and saying, with something of the profane boasting of Artaxerxes, “I will have the ships of my kingdom brought hither, wherewith I will make a bridge to invade this land.”

When Murchardt, king of Leinster, heard this boast, he asked, “Hath the king, in his great threatening, inserted the words, *If it please God?*” “No,” was the reply. “Then,” said Murchardt, “seeing this king putteth his trust only in man, and not in God, I fear not his coming.” When this was told to William, he frowned, and bit his thumb.

Those who believe in an over-ruling Providence—that the God, who made the world, continues to govern it—may acknowledge a needs-be for the migration of those conquering hordes, who rushed, like destroying floods, from the North and East, to the West and South of Europe; that their course was directed by Him, who “hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”

William of Malmsbury seems to view the English conquest as the work of a mightier arm than that of the Conqueror; to esteem it “an extraordinary work of Providence, that the English should have given up all for lost, after the battle of Hastings, where only a small, though brave army, had perished.” “It was indeed,” says the wise and judicious Hallam, “an event not easily paralleled, where the vanquished were little, if at all, less courageous than their enemies; and where no domestic factions exposed the country to an invader.”

Henry of Huntington speaks even more emphatically: “In the year of grace 1060, the Divine Ruler accomplished what he had before purposed, respecting the English nation. He gave them up to the Normans, a cruel and wise people, to be exterminated.” *

This is strong language—*ad extermiandum*—but it would not seem to be too strong for the occasion: “God sees the wretched people,” says the Saxon Chronicler, “most unjustly oppressed; first, they are despoiled of their possessions, and then butchered. Whoever had any property lost it by heavy taxes and unjust decrees.” “It is not easy to relate,” says another writer, “the miseries sustained, at this time, by England, from royal exactions.” † “The nobles and bishops built castles, and filled them with devilish and wicked men, and oppressed the people cruelly, torturing men for their money. They imposed taxes on towns, and when they had exhausted them of every thing, set them on fire. You might travel a day, and not find one man living in a town, nor any land in cultivation. Never did the country suffer greater evils. If two or three men [Normans] were seen riding

* “ Millesimo et sexagesimo sexto anno gratie, perfecit dominator Deus de gente Anglorum quod diu cogitaverat. Genti namque Normanorum asperæ et callidae tradidit eos ad extermiandum.”

† “Non facile protest narrari miseria quam sustinuit illo tempore terra Anglorum propter regius exactiones.” Chro. Saxon, p. 228.

up to a town, all its inhabitants left it, taking them for plunderers. And this lasted, growing worse and worse, throughout Stephen's reign. Men said openly that Christ and his saints were asleep." [See Chro. Saxon, p. 239.]

"A more general proof of the ruinous oppression of William the Conqueror may be deduced," says Mr. Hallam, "from the comparative condition of the English towns in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and at the compilation of Doomsday. At the former epoch there were, in York, 1607 inhabited houses, at the latter 967; at the former there were in Oxford 721, at the latter 248; of 172 houses in Dorchester, 100 were destroyed; of 243 in Derby, 108; of 487 in Chester, 205. Some other towns had suffered less, but scarcely any one fails to exhibit marks of a decayed population."

But the same eminent writer, who records these devastating examples of the Norman sway, confesses that "good as well as evil resulted from the conquest, even in the time of the Conqueror, who was more despotic and ruthless than any of his descendants."

"The first and more immediate advantage, was that of deterring a wild and unruly people from the evil of anarchy and rebellion, to which they were addicted, and all their risings were without concert and desperate. The tyranny of William displayed less of passion or insolence than of that indifference about human suffering, which distinguishes a cold and far-sighted statesman. Impressed by the frequent rising of the English at the commencement of his reign, and by the recollection, as one historian observes, that the mild government of Canute had only ended in the expulsion of the Danish line, he formed the scheme of rivetting such fetters upon the conquered nation, that all resistance should become impracticable."

But the weight and severity of the Norman yoke was greatly relieved after the death of the Conqueror. Henry II., during

whose reign Ireland was conquered, and annexed to the English crown, is called by Mr. Hallam, "the best of these monarchs." *

And the reign of his son John, who was perhaps the worst, was distinguished by the granting of the *Magna Charta*. It is worthy of remark, that the same noble knights, who conquered Ireland, wrested the sword of oppression from the hands of this cowardly prince, and taught him to respect the liberties of the people.

If the unsettled state of England in 1064 demanded the strong and stern rule of a Conqueror, like William of Normandy, the necessity was even greater in Ireland in 1172, after the lapse of a century.

This necessity is most positively denied by the Irish historian, the Abbe Macgeoghegan, as is also the anarchy, bloodshed, and general violence which prevailed at this time, from one end of the kingdom to the other. He seems to sneer at the notion of Henry II. sending rude Norman knights, to reform the morals and polish the manners of the pious and accomplished Irish of the twelfth century.

"The greater part of those who went to Ireland, under Henry II., to reform the morals of the Irish, were the descendants of the Normans, who had accompanied William the Conqueror into England. Their sojourn in France had been too short to have enabled them to divest themselves, completely, of the barbarous manners of their ancestors, and assume those of the polished people† of that country; and their removal to England did not tend to diminish their ferocity. They must have acquired politeness by inspiration, to have been capable of polishing the manners of others. Such, however, were the *Doctors* whom Henry II. sent

* We say nothing here of the *private* character of Henry II., which Lingard and Macgeoghegan paint in the darkest colors.

† The Abbe dedicates his history to the "Irish Brigade in the service of France."

to Ireland, by apostolical authority (as it is pretended), to re-establish religion, and correct the morals of the people.” *

But unfortunately for the argument of the Abbe, the authority of Pope Adrian is against him, who, in his bull, granting permission to Henry II., to subjugate Ireland, says, “Thou, dearest son in Christ, hast likewise signified to us, that for the purpose of *subjecting the people of Ireland to laws, and eradicating vice from amongst them*, thou art desirous of entering that island; and also of paying for each house an annual tribute of one penny to St. Peter.” We might be tempted ourselves, with the Abbe, who is, *occasionally*, more of an Irishman, or Anti-Anglo-Norman, than a Romanist, to doubt the correctness of the Pope’s information, or even his motives, inasmuch as he stipulates for the “paying for each house, of one penny to St. Peter,” if we had no better authority to rely on. But it is not necessary to go outside the Abbe’s own History for facts to upset his own reasoning. O’Loghlin the “Thunder-bolt of war,” and the “Hector of Modern Europe,” who died A.D. 1166, six years before the Irish conquest, was one of his great and virtuous heroes; but candour compels him to say, “Great men have sometimes great defects, and their virtues are frequently obscured by their vices. The monarch of Ireland was a pious prince, zealous in the cause of religion, and a protector of the Church and its privileges; but his *ruling passion* was anger, which *sometimes degenerated into madness.*”

Mr. Owen Connellan, under the head of “*The Fall of the [Irish] Monarchy,*” says, “The disorganization and anarchy in church and state, and the derangement both of civil and ecclesiastical authority, produced by the sanguinary and destructive Danish wars, incessantly continued, for more than three centuries, together with the fierce and interminable feuds, discords

* The Abbe Macgeoghegan’s History of Ireland, Chap. 15, p. 247.

and ruinous contests of the kings, princes, and chiefs, amongst themselves, inevitably paved the way for the downfall of the Irish monarchy. The contests of the Irish kings were as fierce, and far longer protracted, than those of the rival houses of York and Lancaster, for the crown of England."

"Since the death of Malachy II.," observes O'Conor, "this nation was falling into a state of *political reprobation*; each province set up for itself, the monarchy grew indifferent, and the monarch hateful to the majority of the chieftains. *When Roderick mounted the throne, their measure of iniquity was full.*"

But the reigns of Malachy II. and Brian Boru are considered exceptions to the general system of misrule, anarchy, and blood-shed, which devastated the kingdom. These *Grande Monarchs* are looked upon as the very *beau ideal* of Irish kings and conquerors; and their names are so associated with the poetry of the country, that we almost hesitate to break the spell; but as this portion of our work is historical, we must leave Moore the poet, for Moore the historian, and sometimes Moore the historian, for the Four Masters, and their learned editor, Dr. O'Donovan.

Malachy I., or O'Melaghlin, was the great ancestor of our heroine Dearforgil. It was he who

"Wore the *collar of gold**
Which he took from the proud invader."

Malachy was not only king of Meath, but monarch of all Ireland "*with opposition.*" Some Irish historians say, "*without*

* Dr. O'Donovan denies to Malachy the honor awarded in Moore's immortal lines. "Moore, in a note, in his history of Ireland, Vol. II. p. 95, says, 'The collar of Tomar was a golden torque which the monarch Malachi took from the neck of a Danish chief, whom he had conquered.'" Dr. O'Donovan says on the note, "*There was no Tomar in Malachi's time.*" This is indeed taking the gold from our gingerbread. We are told by the Four Masters, A.D. 994, that the ring of Tomar, and the sword of Carlus were carried away by force by Maelseachlainn, from the foreigners of Athcliath [Dublin.] The original Irish word is Fail and not Torc, and "*fail*" generally means a *ring*, and *torc* a *collar*.

opposition," but this is a figure of speech, for the title of supremacy was always disputed by the rest of the kings, who took all lawful, and unlawful opportunities of resisting the monarch's tribute of black mail, which was seldom, or never, collected without the application of the *lamh lathar*, or more frequently of the *lamh dearg*.*

"Malachy," says Macgeoghegan, "began his reign by attacking the Danes, and fought the memorable battle of Tara, in which they were completely defeated.

"The Danes were forced by these conquests to abandon all the territory they possessed, from the river Shannon to the Eastern ocean, and acknowledge themselves tributary to the monarch. *After this, however, he gave himself up to pleasure, and neglected the welfare of the nation*, whilst the Danish forces continued to increase. The princes of Munster and Connaught having assembled, it was decreed that Malachy should be dethroned, and the sceptre transferred to Brian, king of Munster, a prince who was capable of repressing the insolence of the barbarians." If this be correct, which Dr. O'Brien doubts, they must have taken a hint from the conduct of the frogs in the ditch, who entreated Jupiter to remove the log, and give them a living king. Jupiter heard their prayer and gave them a rattle-snake.

The wrath of Brian Boru, or Boromhe,† was first aroused to fury against the Danes, in revenging the death of his elder brother Mahon, who was treacherously murdered by Molloy, aided and abetted by Ivor, king of the Danes of Limerick. We have a curious and circumstantial account of this murder, and its effects on Brian's mind, in an old Irish book *Cogadh Gaeidheal re Gallaibh*, i.e. "The War of the Gaels (Irish) with the Danes."

* *Lamh lathar*, the "strong hand;" *lamh dearg*, the "red hand."

† Brian Boromhe, i.e. "Brian of the Tribute."

Brian is said to have given expression to his sorrowful revenge in an elegy, the latter part of which we have taken the liberty of paraphrasing thus :—

My heart within this breast had burst,
If vengeance I had longer nursed:
A king ! and brother ! Act accursed !
Their blood shall flow for this foul deed;
I'll crush these vipers and their seed :
Now, Ivor, you or I shall bleed.*

It will surprise, and even shock some of our readers, to hear, that when this distinguished hero, the *very* Robert Bruce (but not William Wallace) of Irish history, “had conceived the ambitious project of deposing the monarch, Malachy, he *joined the Danes* against him. This is sufficient to prove the subjugation of the Danes was not Brian's chief object.†

Brian Boromhe's reign ‡ was as remarkable for anarchy and bloodshed, as any which preceded or succeeded it. That he possessed nothing like the power of the English Conqueror, in suppressing rebellion, or domestic feuds, and restoring order, is evident from the following quotations:—

“The age of Christ 1002. The first year of Brian, son of

* The more correct translation, by Dr. O'Donovan, is as follows :—

“My heart shall burst within my breast,
Unless I avenge this great king :
They shall forfeit life for this foul deed,
Or I shall perish by a violent death.”

† Dr. O'Donovan, whose authority we have quoted in the text, says, “ The Munster writers, with a view of exonerating Brian from the odium of usurpation, and investing his acts with the sanction of popular approval, have asserted, that he had been, previously to his first attack upon the monarch, solicited by the king and chieftains of Connaught, to depose Maelseachlainn, and become supreme monarch himself; but no authority for this assertion is to be found in any of our authentic annals.” *Four masters*, A.D., 1001.

‡ Brian's conduct, before he attained the monarchy, may have been *sans reproche*, but certainly not *sans reproche*. In the Annals of Ireland, bearing date, A.D. 976, [recté 977] we read, “ Inis Cathaigh was violated by Brian, son of Kennedy. The Annals of Clonmacnoise say the holy island of St. Senan was profaned by attacking persons in its sanctuary, as Brian did on this occasion. See Annals of Ireland, A.D., 981, 983, 991, &c.

Ceinneidigh, son of Lorcan, in sovereignty over Ireland. Seventy six* years was his age at that time. A great depredation by Donnchadh, son of Donnchadh Finn, and the Ui-Meath, and they plundered Lann-Leire; but Cathal, son of Labhraidh, and the men of Breagha, overtook and defeated them, and they left behind their booty; and they were afterwards slaughtered, or led captive, together with Sinnach Uah Uarghusa, lord of Ui-Meath. Cathal, son of Labhraidh, and Lorcan, son of Bro-taidh fell fighting face to face. Donnghail, lord of Gaileanga, was slain by Trotan or Torton, in his own house. Ceallach, son of Diarmaid, lord of Osraighe, was slain by Donnchadh, son of Gillaphadraigh, the son of his father's brother. Aedh, lord of Teathbha, was slain by the Ui-Conchille. Conchobhar, son of Maelseachlainn, lord of Corca-Modhruadh, and Aicher Ua Traighthech, with many others, were slain by the men of Umhall. Aedh, son of Echthighern, was slain in the oratory of Ferno. Mor-Maedhog, by Mael-na-mbo."†

Brian proved himself as powerless in the subjugation of the "Foreigners," or Danes, who were possessed of all the principal ports of the kingdom, as in restoring order among the Irish chiefs. The battle of Clontarf was a great victory, but not a decisive event, like that of Bannockburn; though many are in the habit of thinking it so: the Danes still continued in the land, as pricks in the eyes and thorns in the sides of the original inhabitants. "Age of Christ 1018, [recté 1019] Cill-dara was all burned by lightning, excepting one house only: Ceananus was plundered by Sitric, son of Amhlaebh, and the foreigners of

* "This is very much to be doubted, for according to the Annals of Ulster, Brian, son of Kennedy, was born in 941, which looks more likely to be the true date. He was therefore about sixty-one years old when he deposed Maelseachlainn, who was then about fifty-three." *Vide Dr. O'Donovan's notes in loco.*

† Mael-na-mbo, i.e. "Chief of the cows." He was the grandfather of our hero, Diarmaid MacMorrough, king of Leinster.

Ath-Cliath, [Dublin,] and they carried off innumerable spoils and prisoners, and slew many persons in the middle of the church. The shrine of Cianan was plundered by Domhnall, son of Tadhg; and he himself was killed at the end of a week, through the miracles of God, and Cianan."

We find the Danes, not only in possession of the country, in 1171, but strong enough to resist the Norman knights, and to punish them for their dishonour of St. Cianan:—"A.D. 1171. The church of St. Cianan of Duleck was plundered by the knights of Miles de Cogan. Some of them were slain on the day following by the Danes of Dublin, in revenge of their dishonor of St. Cianan. A battle was fought at Dublin between Miles de Cogan and Asgal, son of Reginald, king of the Danes in Ireland; many fell on both sides of the English knights and Danes of Dublin, among whom was Asgal himself, John, a Norwegian from the Orkney Isles, and many others."

We are disposed to conclude it had been better for Ireland to have encountered a stronger foe at an earlier period: the Irish and Danes were too evenly matched; their contests were like those of the far-famed Kilkenny cats, which left nothing to the belligerents but the tips of their tails.

But it may be replied that the state of society *after* the Norman conquest was almost as bad as before it. It was *almost*, but not quite so bad. Anarchy did not raise her crest as high, but craft and deception, the shields employed by the weak against the strong, prevailed:—"The sway of the English," writes Macgeoghegan, was considered by the natives as a violence, an injustice, and usurpation; consequently, any engagement made with them was looked upon not to be binding. They did not think themselves bound by the law of nature, which forbids us either to take the goods of others, or do violence to their will. They therefore thought themselves dispensed with, *from keeping*

their word with a people who observed no treaty made with them, and whose only rule was the law of the strongest; like a man, who, having given his purse to save his life, thinks he has a right to reclaim it when the danger is over. These are the *principles* which the Irish observed in their conduct towards the English, to whom they saw themselves a prey; principles which drew upon them the exaggerated attacks of Cambrensis.*

But we find the Normans quarrelling among themselves, like common robbers, when they came to divide the spoil. "It appears," says O'Conor, "that the great Anglo-Norman families, as the Fitzgeralds, Butlers, Burkes, &c., carried on almost as fierce contests among themselves as the Irish chiefs;" and Cox, speaking of those dissensions, both of the English and Irish, amongst themselves and against each other, in the thirteenth century, says—"That it appeared as if some malignant star had influenced all the inhabitants of Ireland to contention."

When, or why, was Ireland called the "*Island of Saints?*" Had there been saints in the land before the introduction of Christianity, we should say it gained the high appellation during the reign of Gedhe Ollghothach, in Anno Mundi 3960, for "observers of antiquity affirm of him that the conversation of his subjects in general, in his time, *was as sweet a harmony to one another as any musick*, because they lived together in such concord, amity and atonement among themselves, that there was no discord or strife heard to grow between them, for any cause whatsoever." [See Annals of Clonmacnoise.]

Feeling some hesitation in deciding for ourselves against the

* We grant to Macgeoghegan that deception is the *natural* product of oppression, that falsehood is the shield of the slave; perhaps we may go further, and say, that the crime of producing slavery is greater than the crimes slavery produces; but we must condemn *both*; and therefore regret to see the Reverend Abbe giving his authority or countenance to "the PRINCIPLES" which the Irish observed in their conduct towards the English.—Macgeoghegan's Irish History, p. 247-8.

claims of Ireland to be called the “*Island of Saints*,” we wrote to Doctor O’Donovan, of the Four Masters, and the following is his reply:—“I have been long under the impression that this appellation was given by some foreign writer, in consequence of the number of missionaries which Ireland sent abroad from the sixth to the ninth centuries. I do not believe that the name was applied to Ireland, on account of the peace and tranquility which, at any period, reigned among the laity. If Ireland ever deserved the appellation of which the bards boast, ‘Erin, pure Island of Saints,’ it must have been during the seventh and eighth centuries. I am a bad believer in saints, or ancient civilisations, for which I must suffer some thousands of years in purgatory. I hope you will weigh this subject well, which is of great importance.” Doctor O’Donovan gives the correct clue to the difficulty, where he says, “the appellation was given in consequence of the *number* of missionaries sent abroad.” In the first ages of the Christian church the term “saint” was applied to *all believers*. In course of time it was confined to *churchmen*. It is so employed in the Annals of Ireland. [See *Age of Christ*, 664.] The term might be correctly rendered *Island of Monks*, for Ireland was as much the Land of Saints in the eighth and ninth centuries, as are Italy, Spain, and Portugal in the nineteenth.

But every country under heaven has had its golden age. We are told that Rollo, the great ancestor of the Conqueror, suspended a valuable bracelet from an oak, in a forest near the Seine, and that it remained there for three years. Bede says of the kingdom of Northumberland, in the reign of Edwin, that “a woman with a new-born child might travel over the whole island without fear of insult.” And it is recorded in the Four Masters, under date A.D. 1167, that “women used to travel Ireland alone.” The poet Moore has presented us with one memorable example.

“ Rich and rare were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore;
But oh! her beauty was far beyond
Her sparkling gems or snow-white wand.

Lady! dost thou not fear to stray,
So lone and lovely, through this bleak way?
Are Erin’s sons so good or so cold,
As not to be tempted by woman or gold?

Sir Knight! I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm,
For though they love women and golden store,
Sir Knight, they love honor and virtue more!

On she went, and her maiden smile,
In safety lighted her round the green isle;
And blest for ever is she who relied
Upon Erin’s honor and Erin’s pride!”

If the women who “travelled alone,” in the twelfth century, were anything like this vision of beauty, God must have had them in his special keeping. By what fatality Dearforgil, the Princess of Brefney, fell into the hands of Diarmaid, will be explained in the following story.

DEARFORGIL.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUEEN'S BOWER.

Diarmaid* MacMorrrough, king of Leinster, was a man of tall stature, dark aspect, and unsocial habit.

His dark mood was mysteriously associated with the memory of his queen, Una—the daughter of O'More, prince of Leix—a woman of great beauty, and high pride. Their union was of short duration. Reports of its sudden and unexpected termination were various. The story which received the most general currency, ran thus:—It was night as the king was returning from the chase, accompanied by a favorite hound. In passing through the “Queen's Bower,”—known afterwards as the “*Bloody Bower*”—he started what he first thought was a wolf, prowling beneath the very windows of Una's chamber. He set on the dog, and followed hard after it. The night was dark, but not dark enough to hide from the glance of a jealous husband's eye, the outlines of a man's figure, which he pursued through the wood, with the deadly sound of “Treason! treason!” on his lips,

* Diarmaid, Dermot, or Dermod, appears to be derived from *dia*, “a god,” in Irish, and Armaid, the genitive (plural) of arms, Homer calls one of his heroes *dia kparepos*, “the godlike fighting” Diomede. Diarmaid is a very common name with Irish kings.

while the sweat, like drops of blood, ran down his brow, and across his red eye-balls.

Hastening to a spot where two paths met, he found his faithful dog—as he first thought—dying from the effects of a blow which laid the head open, sweeping away one ear, close to the bone. A portion of a chief's mantle was in his mouth. The king disentangled the cloth from the hound's teeth, hid it in his bosom, and hastened, with a brow as dark and tempestuous as a thunder-cloud, to the queen's apartments.

“ What is the name of the paramour, with the green mantle, who has just left thy presence, madam?” inquired Diarmaid, pale with passion.

The queen trembled, but replied not.

“ Would you know his garment?” continued he, holding out the bloody cloth.

“ O God ! have you slain him?” fiercely shrieked the queen, as she fell at his feet.

What happened after that, the grave alone can disclose. The queen disappeared, but *how?* No one could positively say. Some asserted that blood was found on the floor of her chamber; others that a lady, of wild aspect, and dishevelled hair, passed through the forest late that night.

These dark surmises, which flitted before men's minds, in the absence of clearer evidence, as bats before their eyes, in twilight, were sufficient to account for the dark and unsocial bearing of the king of Leinster.

But, on the other hand, there was a party in the palace, who positively affirmed, that Diarmaid never loved his queen, and continued, even after his marriage, to mourn for the beautiful Dearforgil, who had been torn from his embrace, and given to Tiernan O'Rourke, Prince of Brefney, in violation of promises, and plighted troths, at the despotic will of the maiden's father,

O'Melaghlin, king of Meath. The queen of Leinster, they asserted, (who was a proud and imperious woman, and could endure no rival) hearing of Diarmaid's undying affection for Dearforgil, felt, like Juno, at the judgment of Paris :—

Manet alta mente repostum
Spretæque injuria formæ.

“ O that I had known of this before ! ” exclaimed she. “ What care I to share his throne, while I possess no place in his heart, which still goes after that vile witch Dearforgil. Had I accepted the hand of — or devoted my virgin affections to the church, it had not been thus. O’Conchabar, my son, were thy succession to thy father’s throne secured, thy mother — . ”

Such were a few of the passionate and broken exclamations she was overheard to utter, before her mysterious disappearance. At least so said the gossips of the palace.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEVEN GLOWING WITNESSES.

The transactions of that dark night were deeply and indelibly written on Diarmaid’s gloomy brow; but they were written in hieroglyphics, or black letter, which the ignorant and uninitiated could not read; and their political and moral bearing were such as to excite the curiosity, and exercise the genius of Shaun O’Davarán, the brehon or judge, and Maurice Regan, the king’s Ollav in Penmanship and Poetry,* for Irish princes practised

* Maurice Regan is mentioned in Harris’s *Hibernica*, as “ King Dermot’s Secretary.”

the humility of keeping wise men near their persons, while English monarchs—from excess of wisdom, no doubt—retained the services of court fools.

The veneration entertained for the character of both brehon and ollav (judge and poet), and the position which they held in king's palaces, contrasts curiously with the otherwise barbarous condition of society; and reflects somewhat to the disadvantage of a later age. The ancients clothed their wise men in purple and scarlet, and adorned their persons with collars and chains of gold;* the moderns “build their sepulchres.”

No stronger or more interesting evidence of the estimation in which such men were held could be given, than that which was presented in the color of their garments. We are told by Keating, that “Tighearnmas,” who, according to the chronology of the Four Masters, flourished A.M. 3656, “was the first Irish king who established the custom of distinguishing the rank of his subjects by the different colors of their dress.”†

The garments of a slave contained but one color, those of a peasant two, a soldier's three, a brughaidh, or public victualler's four; there were five in those of a chieftain of a territory, and six in those of an ollav, or a king or queen.

Diarmaid's ollav was a true poet, and the whole *genus*—from Maurice Regan to Oliver Goldsmith—delight in brilliant colors. Maurice was arrayed in scarlet hose, yellow vest, and green

* Dan. v. 29.

† The Four Masters, under date A.M. 3664, give Tighearnmas the credit of introducing the purple, blue, and green dyes, but they add, “Echaidh Eadghadhach, who reigned eight years later, was so called, because it was by him the variety of color was first put on clothes in Ireland, to distinguish the honor of each by his raiment, from the lowest to the highest.” The Four Masters make a seven-fold distinction, thus: “one color in the clothes of slaves, two in the clothes of soldiers, three in the clothes of goodly heroes or young lords of territories, six in the clothes of ollavs, and seven in the clothes of kings and queens.” The list is not complete here, but it is probable that the robes of kings and queens were distinguished by the seven colors, that, for them, the royal purple was reserved.

mantle; while his more sober and sedate companion, Shaun O'Davarán, the brehon, who might have assumed the same distinctive badge of merit, was clothed in a grey doublet; over which hung a blue cape; from beneath which, shone a heavy gold chain, at which—if we must expose the poet's weak point—Regan sometimes cast a covetous glance.

"Is there, think you, O'Davarán, any charm in that *muntorc*?* The people say there is."

The brehon smiled, as he asked, "To what charm do you refer, Maurice?"

"You know right well to what I refer," pointing. "They say, if you were to put it round the neck of a guilty person, it would squeeze him to death."

"How so?"

"Why, that it would suffocate him, make him put out his tongue, like a mad dog—the saints preserve us—and tell the whole truth, in spite of himself; and that when you put it round the neck of an innocent man, it expands and reaches to his feet. They say it belonged to Morann† 'The Intelligent,' the son of Cairbre, who got it from a Druid priest."

"If my *muntorc* be possessed of such a charm," replied the brehon, bending his head, and looking within the folds of his

* Dr. Petrie says, that "rings for the neck were called *muntorcs*, and for the arms and legs, *faighe*." *Round Towers*, p. 214.

† "This *Morann*, had a *sin*, or chain, called *Idh Morainn*, which when put around the neck of a guilty person, would squeeze him to suffocation; and when put about the neck of an innocent person, would expand so as to reach the earth." *Four Masters*.—Vol. I. p. 96, note.

We are told by the historian, Rollin—but he does not mention his authority—"that thirty judges were selected out of the principal cities of Egypt, to form a body, or assembly, for judging the whole kingdom. The president of this senate wore a collar of gold, set with precious stones, at which hung a figure represented blind, this being called the emblem of Truth. When the president put on this collar, it was understood, as a signal, to enter upon business. He touched the party with it, which was to gain the cause, and this was the form of passing sentence." *Rollin's Ancient History*.—Vol. I. p. 38-9.

doublet, through which a link or two were shining, “ it would be a dangerous chain around the neck of an unjust judge.”

“ Faith, and that’s true, Shaun ; but *you* have nothing to fear that way ; but, if it were mine, I would not keep it concealed, but expose it before the eyes of all, both good and bad, for we are told in the Book of God, that the sword of Justice is for the fear of evil doers, and to encourage them to behave themselves.”

“ Men fear more for the dagger which lies half hid in the bosom, than the naked sword, employed for parade, or effect. The occasional flash of the forked lightning is more destructive and startling than if the whole sky were illuminated by the Aurora Borealis :

“ One thunder-clap lets all Olympus out.”

“ Beautiful, by the Powers,” exclaimed Regan, with excitement. “ Why, Shaun, the king should have made you his ollav in poetry.”

“ And you his brehon, Maurice.”

“ Bathershin.* But by the virtue of your oath, do you think there is a charm in the chain ; I have a reason for asking.”

“ I do not. The only chain with which a judge can choke a false, or perjured criminal, is the chain of sound argument, (save, and except, the chain, or rope, by which he hangs) ; and I am disposed to think it was with a chain of this description—whose golden links were forged from truth, justice, and ratiocination—that Morann, the Irish brehon, as well as Socrates and Aristotle, confounded the adversaries of Truth and Justice.”

“ Who were they, Shaun ?”

“ Socrates was an Athenian philosopher ; who invented what is styled the Socratic mode of reasoning ; and Aristotle is the great master of the syllogism.”

* *Bathershin*, “ may be so.” The word is ironical, and implies a doubt.

"The syllogism! I never heard of that before."

"You never heard of the *dictum de omne et nullo* of Aristotle?"

"Never, Shaun, upon my troth. I thought myself a learned man, but I never heard tell of that. You see it's not exactly in my line; but I should, notwithstanding, be obliged to you to explain it to me."

"Its principle is simply this, that whatever is predicated, that is, affirmed or denied, universally, of any class of persons or things, is, in like manner, predicated, that is, affirmed or denied, of any person or thing, contained in that class."

"Say that again, Shaun."

"Its principle, I say, is simply this," that whatever is predicated, that is, affirmed or denied, universally, of any class of persons or things, is, in like manner, predicated, that is affirmed, or denied —

"I see," said Maurice, scratching his head, for his brains were *in nubibus*.

"Falsehood in argument," continued the learned brehon, is like poison in your drink. Fallacy consists, generally, of a cunning admixture of truth and falsehood. One drop of sound logic disunites them, and precipitates the falsehood to the bottom."

"One drop of sound logic! What is logic, Shaun? A liquid, it would seem. Do you keep it in a bottle. I knew you had some charm for discovering truth. Shaun, do you think the king poisoned the queen?"

"Hush," said Shaun, raising his hand in kind deprecatory reproof.

"What matter; sure there is no one here, but our two selves."

"Curse not the king, no, not in thy thoughts; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."

“ God forbid that I should curse the king ; and, perhaps, if the truth were known, she deserved what she got—God be merciful to her, for she was a beautiful woman—but now that you speak of the bed-chamber, they say there was blood upon the floor, the night she was mur—hem!——”

“ Hush! hush, Maurice.”

“ Arrah, man, why should I hush: sure there are the marks of it to the present day. Do you think a drop of your logic would take out the stain? If it did, I’d say it was no murder. Would you try it?”

“ No,” replied the brehon, bluntly.

“ Well, what do you say,” said Maurice, coming to the charge with a new park of artillery—for he was determined to extort, *vi et armis*, something more definite in the form of opinion from the brehon, (whom he believed to be possessed of the king’s secret,) than he was disposed to concede—“ but what do you say, Shaun O’Davarán, Chief Brehon of Leinster, what do you say to the *Seven Glowing Witnesses*, of Death, Blasting, Plague, Rebellion, Robbery, Invasion, and Defeat.”

“ Nothing,” replied O’Davarán, emphatically.

“ *Nothing!*”

“ *Nothing.*”

“ Well, Shaun O’Davarán, Chief Brehon of Leinster, you surprise, astonish, confound, and dumb-founder me completely and entirely.”

“ Not *dum-founder*,” replied his friend, with a smile.

Maurice Regan was pleased at the smile, though directed against himself, for O’Davarán dipped the points of the sarcastic arrows he shot at his friend in honey, so that they generally cured the slight wounds they inflicted. Maurice Regan, who was pleased to see the smile, continued his assault:—“ Come, Shaun, be reasonable; a wise judge should not respect the persons of

princes. Did you ever, in all your life, know the Seven Glowing Witnesses to lie?"

"Never. Nor tell the truth either," thought he.

"I knew you were a reasonable man; though, faith, its sometimes hard to get the truth out of you. If you would lend me that logic bottle."

O'Davaran smiled; and replied, "Well, go on; I see you intend to adopt the Socratic mode of argumentation."

"I don't understand what you mean; but you acknowledge the Seven Glowing Witnesses were never known to lie."

"I acknowledge Nature never lies."

"Exactly so: you will also acknowledge that we have been visited, in this kingdom of Leinster, during the last seven years, with Death, Blasting, Plague, Rebellion, Robbery, Invasion, and Defeat?"

"Not more than we were during the seven previous years."

"Not more!"

"Decidedly not."

"O Shaun, I wonder at you. Do you forget the rot among the sheep, last year?"

"No."

"Or the distemper among the cows, two years before that?"

"No."

"That the pigs had the measles the year before that?"

"Some of them."

"And that the year before, the oats and barley failed?"

"They were scanty crops."

"Scanty crops! Shaun, I am ashamed of you."

"But what do you wish to *prove*?" inquired O'Davaran, who saw that his importunate friend would have his "say," at whatever hazard.

"What do I wish to prove? Does Shaun O'Davaran, Chief Brehon of Leinster, ask Maurice Regan what he wishes to prove?"

"Yes he does."

"Nothing."

"*Nothing!*" exclaimed the brehon, in surprise.

"Yes, nothing; but I ask Shaun O'Davaran, Chief Brehon of Leinster, what the Seven Glowing Witnesses prove?"

"*Nothing,*" replied O'Davaran, sturdily.

"*Nothing!* The Seven Glowing Witnesses prove *nothing*: Why that is worse than blasphemy."

"What do you mean?"

"You deny the testimony of seven witnesses, whom you have just confessed, have never lied. Is this your logic; is this your syllogism; is this your *dictum de omne et nullo*? Did you ever hear of the ten plagues of Egypt?"

"Yes,"

"Did you ever hear of the seven years of famine?"

"Yes."

"Well, what did they prove?"

"I never thought of that."

"God help your foolish head!"

O'Davaran smiled.

"Shaun, you are a wise man—that's in some things,—in earthly things: I'd back you against any brehon, in Ireland, for getting the truth out of a culprit: whether you do it by the chain, or the logic bottle, I can't say; but, Shaun, there is a wisdom higher than yours: there is a wisdom in the sun; and a wisdom in the moon; and a wisdom in the stars; if you only understood them. There is a voice in the winds; and a voice in the woods; and a voice in the rivers; and a voice in the sea. These are all God's servants. Oh Shaun O'Davaran, I'm grieved to the

heart to hear you denying the voice of the Seven Glowing Witnesses."

"But you have not told me what they prove," replied Shaun, who was almost tired of his friend's pertinacity. "What do these Seven Glowing Witnesses assert?"

"What do they assert, is it" said Maurice, looking about the apartment to see that no one was in ear-shot—"They say," said he, approaching his friend, and putting his mouth to his ear, "*that Diarmaid MacMorrough, king of Leinster, has committed FIONGAIL!*"*

"For God sake, let no one ever hear you say that again," exclaimed the brehon, starting to his feet: "if the king heard a whisper of that from you, he'd hang you, let you be his *ollav* fifty times over."

"Sit down there: the king is twenty miles away from this."

"No, nor twenty yards," said Diarmaid, king of Lienster, stalking into the room. Let me not disturb you. You were speaking of —

"*Fiongail*, perpetrated on a member of your royal house," replied Maurice Regan, with consummate boldness.

The king started, as if bitten by an adder. The brehon stood amazed.

"To what do you refer," inquired Diarmaid, turning on the *ollav* a glance of fearful significance.

"The Fiongail of Conn of the Hundred Battles," replied Regan, with a composure of mien which a Jesuit might have coveted.

The king's countenance lighted up with pleasure, the brehon turned aside to smile. "You refer to the foul murder of Catheir Mor," said Diarmaid.

"I do, your Majesty."

* *Fiongail*, i.e. murder of a relative.

"You have some verses on his reign: will you repeat them."

"With great pleasure," said Regan. "Hem." But to the king's interview with his ollav and brehon we shall devote another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE KING IN COUNCIL WITH HIS BREHON AND OLLAV.

"I was disputing with O'Davarán, respecting the testimony of the Seven Glowing Witnesses, of Death, Blasting, Plague, Rebellion, Robbery, Invasion, and Defeat, when your Majesty entered," said Regan; "but he seemed disposed to doubt their testimony."

"He is a wise judge who receives even the testimony of his own eyes with caution."

"But the Seven Witnesses, your Majesty; the Seven Glowing Witnesses, of Death, Blasting, Plague, Rebellion, Robbery, Invasion, and Defeat.

"They have bad names, Regan," said the king, with a grim smile, "and their character does not belie it: were I to sit as judge, I should reject their testimony; but proceed with your poetry."

"Hem!"

"I walked entranced through a land of morn;
The sun, with wondrous excess of light,
Shone down, and glanced over seas of corn,
And lustrous gardens aleft and right.
Even in the clime of resplendent Spain
Beams no such sun upon such a land;
But it was the time, 'twas in the reign
Of Cathaeir Mor of the Wine-red hand.

“Anon stood nigh by my side, a man
 Of princely aspect, and port sublime.
 Here, queried I, ‘Oh! my Lord and Khan,
 What clime is this, and what golden time?’
 When he—‘The clime is a clime to praise,
 The clime is Erin’s, the green and bland;
 And it is the time, these be the days
 Of Cathaeir Mor of the Wine-red hand.

“Then I saw thrones, and circling fires,
 And a dome rose near me, as by a spell,
 Whence flowed the tones of silver lyres
 And many voices, in wreathed swell;
 And their thrilling chime fell on mine ears,
 As the heavenly hymn of an angel band—
 It’s now the time, these be the years
 Of Cathaeir Mor of the Wine-red hand.

“I sought the hall, and, behold, a change
 From light to darkness, from joy to woe !
 Kings, nobles, all, looked aghast and strange;
 The minstrel group sat in dumbest show!
 Had some great crime wrought this dread amaze,
 This terror? None seemed to understand!
 ’Twas then the time, we were in the days
 Of Cathaeir Mor of the Wine-red hand.

I again walked forth; but lo ! the sky
 Showed fleckt with blood, and an alien sun
 Glared from the north, and there stood on high,
 Amid his shorn beams—a skeleton!
 It was by the stream of the castled Maine,
 One autumn eve, in the Teuton’s land,
 That I dreamed this dream of the time and reign,
 Of Cathaeir Mor of the Wine-red hand.” *

“It is now a thousand years,” said the king, musing with himself, rather than addressing his companions, “since Conn of the Hundred Battles slew Cathaeir Mor, the great ancestor of

* Mangan.

my house. Turlough O'Conor and his son Roderick still display the same enmity to me, and my family, that their ancestors did before them.* These kings of Connaught would fain be *Sovereigns!* forsooth; and demand tribute from Leinster; an honor never enjoyed by one of their family before. Let them not forget that the kings of Connaught paid tribute to my great-great-grandfather, Mael-na-mbo, king of Ireland, of the Danes of Dublin, and of Wales. I dispute not the right of O'Neill, who is descended from the warlike Niel, of the Nine Hostages, but the case is different with the descendant of Eochedh Muighmheadhoin. How did he get that name, Maurice?"

"I believe, your Majesty, he often had '*a cutting*' in the belly." †

* "The age of Christ 122 Cathaeir Mor, after having been three years king over Ireland, was slain by Conn, and the Luaignhi of Teamhair, [Inhabitants of Meath] in the battle of Magh h-Ayha."—"It is curious to remark," observes Dr. O'Donovan, "that in about 1000 years after this period, the descendants of Conn and Cathaeir contended for power as fiercely as their ancestors, namely Roderick O'Conor, king of Connaught, and Dermot Mac Morrough, king of Leinster; for although they could not boast of more than one monarch of Ireland, in either family, for a period of, at least, 1000 years, still did each regard himself as fit for the monarchy (the one as already crowned, the other as fit to be crowned;) while O'Neill of Ulster, and O'Melaghlin of Meath, looked upon both as usurpers." In the speech, said by Giraldus Cambrensis, to have been delivered by Dermot to his army, he is represented as having spoken thus:—"Sed si Lageniam querit: quoniam aliqui Connactensium aliquando subjecta fuit: ea ratione et nos Connactum petimus, quia nostris aliquaties cum totius Hiberniae subditæ fuerat monarchia."—Hibernia Expugnata, lib. I. c. 8. Dermot refers here to Mael-na-mbo, his great-great-grandfather, who was king of Ireland, of the Danes of Dublin, and of Wales, in 1069; and to Cathaeir Mor, from whom he was the twenty-fourth in descent, for he could boast of no other monarch of all Ireland, in his family. Roderick O'Conor could reckon his own father only to the time of Eochedh Muighmheadhoin, in the fourth century: his ancestors were set aside for the more warlike race of Neill, of the Nine Hostages, the ancestors of the illustrious family of O'Neill.

† Keating says, he was so called, "because his middle was like that of a slave." The Annals of Clonmacnoise explain the matter thus:—"Eochy reigned about eight years, and was called Moymeyne or "Moist-middle, because he was much troubled with the flux of the belly." We conclude that James I. of pious memory, better known, in Ireland, by the name of *Shamus* — we forgot the rest—had "*a cutting*" also.

"I hope soon to give his presumptuous descendants a cutting on the back," said the king, advancing to a part of the room, from which hung a number of spears, skeins and swords. He took down a broad-headed spear, of ancient date, and cunning workmanship; poised it on his hand, looked through the open casement, pointed it at an oak, which grew within a hundred yards of the palace. The weapon sped like an arrow from the bow, and buried half its shaft in the hard wood.

The king, who appeared excited, laughed curiously.

"Faith, if that tree was O'Conor's body, you might call him *Muighmheadhoin*, or 'moist-middle,' in earnest."

"He'd have cause to complain of '*a cutting*;' as you call it."

"He would, your Majesty; ha! ha! Faith that's good."

"We kings of Leinster should be skilful in the use of the lance; for, if I mistake not, Maurice, my kingdom is called *Laighin** after it?"

"Sure enough, your Majesty, it was."

"Perhaps you will tell us the story, Maurice. I am sure O'Davarán will be happy to hear it," said the king, seating himself.

The brehon bowed.

"Once upon a time, in the year of the world 4658, that is just 542 years before the birth of the Blessed Saviour,† there lived in Ireland one Covhagh Cael Breagh, who after reigning for fifty years as undisputed monarch, was slain, with thirty of his princes, by Lawry Longseach, *i.e.* Moen, at a feast."

* "Labhraidd returned to Ireland, with a force of 2200 men, who brought with them a kind of broad-headed lance, or javelin, called laighin, from which the province of Leinster, which had been previously called *Gáitán*, received the appellation of *Laighin*." *Keating. Four Masters, Vol. I, p. 76.*

† We here quote from the Annals of Ireland, the chronology of which differs (as the reader will observe) very considerably from that commonly received in the present day. According to it, the Birth of Christ occurred in the year of the world 5200, *i.e.* 1200 years after the generally received date, 4000.

"This Lawry, or Moen, was, I believe, the king's nephew, and was called '*Lawry of the Foreigners*,'" broke in Diarmaid.

"The same, your Majesty; but he was not so much to blame, after all, for the king had killed his grandfather, and banished him the kingdom. The young man fled to France, where he would, no doubt, have remained, but was over-persuaded by the beautiful Lady Moriat, the daughter of Scoriat, princess of Corcaguiny, in Kerry, to come home.* Moen, who could not resist—who could blame him, your Majesty—came to Ireland with 2200 men, armed with a broad-headed lance, which they called '*laighin*', from which the kingdom of Leinster, that was before called *Gailian*, received the name of *Laighin*. They landed in the harbour of Wexford, marched from that to Dinnrigh, on the river Barrow, near Leighlin, where they rushed into the palace, put the king and thirty of his nobility to the sword, or I should say, *the lance*, and set fire to the palace."

"And this country," said *Diarmaid na n Gall*, (i.e. "Dermot of the Foreigners") "this country will never be conquered, or brought under proper subjection to one prince, without the aid of foreign troops."

"God forbid it should!" exclaimed the ollav.

The king, who found himself thinking aloud, started to his feet, and ordered his chariot.

"Your chariot, Righ," said the inquisitive ollav, in surprise.

* The story is told differently in the Annals of Clonmacnoise:—"In the end, after long banishment, his great uncle, the king of Ireland, made friendship with him, and bestowed upon him, and his heirs, the province of Leinster; since which time there hath been mortal hatred, strife, and debate, between these of the province of Connaught, Ulster and Leinster; the one descending of king Covhagh, and the other of his brother, king Logery Lork. King Covhagh was invited to a feast, by his nephew, Lawrey; and there was treacherously burned, together with thirty Irish Princes, in his own house after he had reigned seventeen years. King Covhagh had little care to the proverb, which is, that, 'one should never trust a reconciled adversary.'"

"Yes," replied the king, laying his hand familiarly on the shoulder of his learned friend, "have you any objection?"

"*Objection!* your Majesty; no, but——

"But what?"

"Your Majesty only employs your chariot, in war; or on high state occasions."

"And *if*, in war, what then?"

"Your ollav would wish to be present, to rehearse your noble deeds."

"Or sing my funeral requiem."

"O God forbid!"

"Well, as I anticipate neither glory, nor danger, from the present expedition, I shall forego the pleasure of your company, and leave you with O'Davarán, to the peaceful pursuits of poesy, within the walls of the palace." Saying which, he waved his hand, vaulted into his war chariot, to which were yoked four noble steeds, champing their bits with impatience. "Come Thorkil, away!" and away they dashed, as fast as four horses could carry them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BREHON AND OLLAV DISCUSS THE KING'S CHANGE OF MOOD AND MANNER.

"Thorkil," whom Diarmaid addressed, as he sprung into the chariot, was blind of one eye, and minus an ear, though still in his prime.

There may be sentiment as well as whim in naming a dog, or a horse; and not unfrequently a delicate compliment is

intended, although we are too obtuse, or unsentimental, to observe or appreciate it. "What is the name of the heroine of your first story?" inquired a friend, who had just returned from a horse fair. "Ellen," we replied; "but why do you ask?"—"I intend to call my mare after her." "Thank you." The mare cost just nine pounds, and was spavined, and blind of an eye.

"Knowest thou, Maurice, said the brehon, who first broke silence, after the king's departure (for the ollav seemed, to use his own expression, "dumb-founded,") "knowest thou, Maurice," inquired his friend, the brehon, why the king calls that dog Thorkil?"

"Don't you think it a good name for a dog?"

"I do; but I ask you if you know why he is so called, and who he is named after?"

"Do I *know*," said Maurice—who was never, in all his life, more puzzled to decipher the hieroglyphics of the king's conduct—"do I *know* why he calls that poor brute Thorkil," reiterated the ollav, while a supercilious smile—that implied a vast amount of knowledge—turned up the corner of his mouth and bent down the end of his eye-brow—"do I know every thought and movement of him, as well as if I were inside of him."

"Of the dog, is it?"

"No, it is *not* the dog; but his master."

"But do you know why he calls the dog Thorkil?"

"Know why he calls the dog Thorkil! *Nabocklish!* Isn't Asculph MacThorkil the son of Reginald the Second, nephew of Brodar, grandson of Thorkil, and therefore called MacThorkil; he is a descendant of the Norwegian Earls of Orkneys, and king of the Danes of Ath-cliath.* And was it not he who had the

* "*Ath-cliath* i. e. Dublin or Duiblinne, i. e. Blackpool. This was the name of that part of the river Liffey, on which the city of Dublin stands. We

king's father, Murrow Mac Morrogh, assassinated at a conference, held in that city, and his body buried in the same grave with that of his dog.* That dog was the great-great-grandfather of young Thorkil. God save us, to bury a Christian king with a dog! These Danes are no better than heathens, though they call themselves Christians. Do you think Diarmaid MacMorrough, king of Leinster, could forget that? Never. He never forgets anything; but lest he should, he calls the dog Thorkil to remind him."

"It was a foul deed," said the brehon; "but have you ever remarked, that the king has no objection to the title *Diarmaid na n Gall?*"

"We are all fond of titles, for that matter. I like to be called the king's "Chief Ollav in Penmanship and Poetry;" and you "Chief Brehon of Leinster;" but don't imagine it's out of love he desires to be called *Diarmaid na n Gall*, or king of the Foreigners; perhaps the very contrary, as it gives him the power of taxing them; and hanging them, when they refuse to pay. *Love! Eyeh!*"

"There may be truth in what you say, Maurice," replied the brehon—who seemed more disposed, than usual, to gossip with his inquisitive companion—"there may be truth in what you say; but did you observe the interest the king seemed to take in your story about Moen of the Foreigners?"

"Why, you have often listened to my stories with interest, yourself; though a man of deep learning; and, let me ask, why not, Shaun O'Davarán?"

have a Blackpool, or Dublin, in the city of Cork; and we must confess, that, in the Southern city, the name is significant of the place.

* "Asculph MacThorkil, then the Danish king of Dublin, prepared to defend the city. Dermot MacMurrogh was much incensed against them, the Danes having some years before ignominiously put to death his father, Murrough, king of Leinster, and buried his body, in derision, with that of a dog." *Connellan's Notes to Four Masters.* p. 538.

"Very true, Maurice: your very manner of telling a story, adds much to its interest; but did you not remark something very peculiar about the king's manner?"

"*Peculiar! By the Powers——*"

"Did you hear him say, as he mused to himself, 'and this country will never be conquered, or brought under subjection to one prince, without the aid of foreign troops?'"

"Hear him! of course I did; and saw him start to his feet, when he found himself thinking aloud."

"Exactly, that is the very point I wished to speak about."

"What do you think he meant by 'foreign troops'?"

"I was going to ask you that question, Maurice."

"Then, by my faith, I think you are better able to answer it than I am."

"What! than you, who 'know every movement of the king as well as if you were inside of him.'"

"That's true, in one way, Shaun; but there's no rule without an exception; and, between you and me, a change has come over the king of late, that has thrown me off the scent. I understand him in his dark mood, which has been on him now for near seven years. You see he was fond of having me near him, to play the harp—the sound seemed to banish the—the—spirit—hem! He then spoke to me, and allowed me to question him ; some feared him more, at this time, than a lion from the woods; but I found him as mild as a lamb—but since that time he was in Meath, with young Melaghlin, king of Tara, he is another man. He seems more cheerful, and social, than before; but I don't know; there is some devilment in the back of his eye, I cannot make out; and I'm afraid to ask him."

"I would not advise you; but have you heard him make any remark of late, which might give the clue to his purpose?"

"Not a word, except the remark you heard him make, about foreign troops."

"What did he mean, think you, by foreign troops; the English, or the Danes?"

"The English, I should say."

"Or perhaps the Welch. His great-great-grandfather, Mael-na-mbo, was called the king of Wales, as well as king of the Danes. I know he has ambition; but whether he is under the influence of this lion-like passion, or some other, I cannot decide. I believe Henry II. of England would give his right hand to gain a firm footing in this country."

"Do you think so? If we knew where he has gone."

"That's easy enough."

"Where?"

"He has gone to the chariot races on the Curragh of Cill-dara."

[Kildare.]

"What next."

"Do you think, from what you know of the king for the last seven years, he would be likely to take an interest in these races?"

"Faith you're right, Shaun; there is something else in the wind; and the Curragh of Cill-dara is not the place he would be likely to visit, after *what happened there*: you know what I mean!"

"The less we say about that the better, Maurice"

"May be so; but why the d—l did you not let me know, he was going to the races. Well, now, that's provoking," scratching behind his ear.

"Why?"

"Because I'd have asked him to take me."

"Well, Maurice, you will never grow old."

"Never, Shaun; my heart is as young and merry as when I was a boy of sixteen, and I am now sixty; and I'd enjoy a race



now, as much as ever; and especially a chariot race. Blood-alive man!"—with a flourish of his hand and leg.

Should any of my readers possess the same juvenile feelings as the king's ollav, I shall be happy to give them a seat in my "machine;" but as more than one may possibly get in, I must yoke to a new horse; or, to speak without a figure, commence a new chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHARIOT RACES OF KILDARE.

Diarmaid reined in his four foaming steeds, on the *Magh Breagh** or "Magnificent plain," upon which the armies of Christendom might have drawn up in battle array. He raised his head and looked proudly round him. As he did so, his nostril dilated like that of the war-horse, that "smelleth the battle afar, and the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

"Ha!" exclaimed the excited monarch, speaking with himself, as he cast a rapid glance across the Curragh, upon which horses and chariots were curveting in various circles, "There goes O'Loughlin; and by St. Bridget, a noble charioteer. But who is this thundering in his rear. May the fiends seize me,

* "The Cuirreach or Curragh, was a part of the *Magh Breagh*, or 'Magnificent Plain,' which extended to the river Liffey, and was therefore called *Cuirreach Liffe*. The word has two significations, namely a shrubby moor, and a level plain, or race course, and it appears from the derivation given of the word, in Cormac's Glossary, that it has had this two-fold application from a very early period."—*Vide Dr. O'Donovan's notes to Annals of Ireland, Vol. II. p. 272.*

but it is Roderick O'Conor. If my eyes mistake not, the old man, whose grey hair waves in the wind, on yonder hillock, is his father, Turlough, whom we must call *Monarch*, forsooth. Well, let it be so; he is the first of his family, and shall be the last, to receive tribute from Leinster. It would ill beseem me to break spear, or battle-axe with the old man; but when he goes—Roderick, beware! But let me not forget, we meet now *as friends!* We come here to pare the claws of the eagle of Brefney, Tiernan O'Rourke, who has been pouncing upon the flocks of O'Conor. Well, I can join them here, with heart and hand; though I see their ulterior object. The prince of Brefney has always been a troublesome neighbour to O'Conor, who will find it easier to wrest the south of Brefney from O'Melaghlin, (to whose dominions it is to be added) than from O'Rourke. O'Melaghlin's hand will be the instrument employed to take the prey from the fire; and should he burn his fingers, it is no affair of mine; let them pull it and haul it between them. I owe the father of Dearforgil no favour; still, as *her* father, I should be sorry. But who are those approaching in the royal chariot? O'Melaghlin and his son! Speak of the ——”

O'Melaghlin, the aged king of Meath, who was fond of displaying the trappings of royalty—the only part of it his more warlike companions had left him—drove up in a splendid chariot of green and gold, and saluted Diarmaid graciously, who bowed low in return. More friendly and cordial greeting passed between the son, Melaghlin, king of East Meath, or Tara, and the king of Leinster. They descended from their chariots, and embraced.

“ How is Dearforgil?” inquired Diarmaid, when he had the young man's ear in private.

“ Well, I believe, in *health.*”

“ But still unhappy?”

"As unhappy as you could possibly desire, Diarmaid," replied the king of Tara, laughing heartily.

"Nay, you know me not, if you think so," said Diarmaid, smiling, for the remark of Dearforgil's brother touched, or tickled the surface of his mind, like the feather of an arrow, shot at random.

"You would rather hear of her happiness then?"

"Yes, provided she was out of the hands of that monster, O'Rourke."

"And in the arms of that monster—Hem!"

"Cease your folly, Melaghlin; and tell me where he has carried her."

"What would you give to know."

"My life," said Diarmaid, with energy.

"To a lonely island, in——"

"Where?

"Hush. Here comes my father."

"We shall be considered wanting in respect and courtesy," said O'Melaghlin, the father, driving up to where the king of Leinster and his son stood, "should we delay longer in paying our respects to the monarch, who waits our approach."

"D—n the monarch," said Diarmaid between his teeth. "You, sire, should be the last to bow the knee, or bend the back to king of Connaught; such counsel ill becomes a descendant of Malachi II."

"Diarmaid, I thank thee for the word; know you not that my noble ancestor, descended from the monarchy of Ireland, to the kingship of Meath, giving place to Brian Boromhe. The oldest trees of the forest bow before the whirlwind, and raise their heads after it has swept by. It was so with Malachi, whose throne was occupied for years by Brian; and who regained it after the battle of Clontarf, where that great man

was slain. Malachi lived afterwards to fight the battle of Ath-buidhe, against the foreigners of Ath-cliath.”*

“But what do you expect by your submission to Turlough O’Conor, whom you surely would not compare to Brian?”

“No more than I would compare myself to Malachi. Are you not aware that the object of our present meeting is to wrest the south of Brefney, or more correctly, the north of West Meath, from O’Rourke, and add it to my dominions?”

“Yes, I am aware that you have not found the Prince of Brefney one whit less placable, after sacrificing your daughter to your wily policy; and only hope O’Conor may prove a better neighbour, but I doubt it.”

“Hush! hush! Diarmaid; lovers’ quarrels should be forgotten by men of your age; but let us hasten to salute the monarch, who waits our approach.”

Turlough O’Conor, king of Connaught, and monarch of all Ireland, “with opposition,” was far advanced in years; but he lacked nothing of energy or enterprise. His person was tall and commanding, his general aspect stern, and his features strongly marked by the passions of his mind. His eye had the fierce, stealthy, and untamed flash of a tiger, an eye before which the chiefs of Connaught, and the royal princes, quailed.†

The old monarch cast on the king of Leinster—who approached him with little ceremony—a cold and frigid glance, which fell as innocuous on Diarmaid’s brow as the rays of a December sun upon his brazen shield.

“We have assembled here, your Majesty, said O’Melaghlin, addressing the monarch, to learn your purpose, respecting the

* “The age of Christ, 1022. The victory of Ath-buidhe was gained by Maelseachlainn over the foreigners of Ath-cliath, where many were slain, of which was said—

His last bloody victory was in the evening, at Ath-buidhe;

Thirty revolving days from this until his death.”—*Four Masters*.

† His cruelty, even to his own children, one of whom he blinded, was notorious.

suppression of O'Rourke's rebellious practices, and the curtailing of his overgrown territories."

"Part of which you will have no objection," said the old man, with the leer of a hyena, "to see attached to your own kingdom of West Meath. But what shall we do with the rest?"

"East Meath is the smallest kingdom in Ireland," broke in Melaghlin, the son.

Turlough O'Conor, who sought a portion of the spoil, looked as fiercely at the young man as the lion in the fable, at the ass, who lacked the wisdom of apportioning the king of beasts the larger share.

"Hush, Melaghlin," said the father, with the cunning of the fox; "the monarch will make a fair distribution."

"I shall consent to no dismemberment of Brefney, for the increase of the kingdom of Connaught," said O'Loughlin O'Neill, with decision.

"Nor I," said Diarmaid, with calm determination.

"Why not?" inquired Roderick O'Conor, with indignation.

"Silence, Roderick!" roared the father. "We have no such intention, my lords; the only question is, whether any part of the forfeited property be given the king of East Meath, or the whole apportioned to the father."

"The whole to the father," said Roderick.

"So say I," said the monarch: "king's sons should be satisfied to reign *after*, not during the lives of their fathers." He looked significantly towards his own son Roderick in pronouncing these words. "The young man has more than befits his years, or discretion, already. To be king of Tara is an honour which has turned his brain."

Young Melaghlin met the reproof with a smile. Diarmaid and O'Neil making no objection, the monarch inquired what force each of the kings would be able to bring into the field. After

hearing their reply, and deciding on the time and place of rendezvous, he broke up the conference thus :—

“ Now, my lords, for the races ; this is the ostensible object for which we are assembled on the Curragh ; and we must amuse these people, or we shall have them, by and bye, at each others throats. Roderick,” addressing his son, “ are your four horsed chariots on the course?”

“ Both chariots and charioteers wait a competitor for your gemmed cup,* sire.” There was a personal challenge in Roderick’s eye, as he raised his head, and looked Diarmaid full in the face.

“ I shall not disappoint you,” replied the king of Leinster. “ Ho! there,” calling to his grooms, who stood by the heads of four splendid greys, attached to a chariot of superior workmanship and gorgeous splendour. The harness of the horses was of polished gold, which reflected the rays of the meridian sun, like a brazen mirror. “ My chariot and horses against your father’s gemmed cup.”

“ Done !” exclaimed Roderick.

“ You shall not contend alone,” said O’Neill, springing into a red chariot, drawn by four black horses.

The course was six miles. Turlough sat as judge. The chariots started at the third wave of a small green flag.

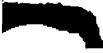
* We have abundant evidence of the existence of gemmed cups, collars, rings, and costly chariots at a very early period in Ireland. “The Age of Christ 9. The sixteenth year of Crimthainn, in the sovereignty of Ireland, when he died at Dun-Crimthainn, at Edair, after returning from the famous expedition upon which he had gone. It was from this expedition he brought with him the wonderful jewels, among which were a golden chariot, and a golden chess-board (inlaid), with a hundred transparent gems, and the Cedach-Crimthainn, which was a beautiful cloak embroidered with gold. He brought a conquering sword, with many serpents of refined massy gold inlaid in it; a shield, with bosses of bright silver; a spear, by the wound inflicted of which, no one recovered; a sling from which no erring shot was discharged; and two greyhounds, with a silver chain between them, which chain was worth three hundred cumhals; with many other precious stones.”—Dr. O’Donovan’s edition *Four Masters*, Vol. I. p. 93-4.

Roderick, we have before stated, drove violently; but, to an experienced eye, there was no difficulty in deciding on the result of the contest. O'Conor took the lead, and was allowed to keep it for two thirds of the course. O'Neill thundered at his heels. Diarmaid, who seemed to keep his steeds in check, brought up the rear; occasionally raising his head, and out-stretched neck—like a hawk in pursuit of a pair of sparrows. As he neared the goal, he shook the reins, and raised a voice, * the sound of which startled his horses into maddening speed; they, the chariot, and charioteer seemed to fly. It was no longer Diarmaid, God of Arms, who drove, but Phaethon, the Prince of Charioteers.

O'Conor used his utmost exertion to keep the first place, and O'Neill to take it; their chariots are now abreast; they approach a rapid curve, forming an angle on the course, of about forty-five degrees. O'Neill is within, O'Conor without the curve. War hawk! “Whish,” “crash,” “smash,” and Roderick and his chariot are whirled through the air, and flung with fearful violence to the ground, after describing a circle of about thirty yards in diameter.

As Diarmaid could not have accomplished this feat upon his friend, Roderick, without losing the race himself—for his own chariot was driven out of course by the concussion—there were few on the ground, with the exception of the O'Conors, who did not attribute the *accident* to careless, or too desperate driving; but both Roderick and his father, Turlough, swore it was designed, and with malice prepense. This idea was scouted by O'Neill, who came in winner. As we are not in a position to state whether Roderick's broken and bloody head, or his father's gemmed bowl, would have afforded Diarmaid the greater satis-

* Various writers speak of the power of the king of Leinster's voice, which was clearly heard amid the din of battle.



faction, we must leave this question in the same undecided state that we find it in the stories of the old chroniclers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRIGANDS IN THE WOOD.

It was near twelve o'clock at night. The stillness of death brooded over the course which had been instinct with life during the day. The congregated kings and chiefs had turned their horses heads towards their respective provinces and castles. But in the depth of the forest of Cill-dara, at no great distance from the Curragh, stalks a tall and majestic figure, wrapped in a dark cloak, preceded by an Irish wolf dog, that keeps his nose near the ground.

"I know not what confidence may be placed in the statements of her thoughtless scattered-brained brother," mused the king of Leinster; "and her father," continued he, "enfolds his purposes so artfully in words. Well, Thorkil, what's amiss now?" addressing the dog. "Father O'Toole, who is, or *was* her confessor, is, or was lately staying at this monastery," looking at the round tower of Cill-dara, or Kildare, which rose above the tops of the trees. "Without my aid, he can never hope to be bishop of the Foreigners of Ath-cliath.* I might possibly learn from him the state of Dearforgil's feelings. Down, Thorkil, down! what ails the dog?"

Thorkil, whom we have already stated was blind of an eye, and minus an ear, was standing on his hind legs, with his fore-paws against his master's bosom, barring his passage; and he

* *The Foreigners of Ath-cliath*, i. e. the Danes of Dublin.

would disposed, should Diarmaid advance another step, to take him by the collar. He looked in the moonlight like an old Chelsea pensioner, with a cocked hat.

"Down, dog!"

"Devil a bit," growled Thorkil; "are you deaf, or blind; do you see the armed men in the thicket?"

Diarmaid, after awaking from his reverie, was not long in discovering what had attracted the dog's notice.

"So, so; I see my brave dog," patting him. Drawing a sword from beneath his cloak, he approached more cautiously. "A party of brigands, no doubt; this wood, I hear, is infested by them,"* turning on his heel. But he had not advanced far in the opposite direction, before Thorkil re-assumed the functions of sentinel, and growled "Stop, there are more of them in yonder scrubby cover."

"Whew! Thorkil, I fear we have fallen into a nest of hornets," whispered the king in the dog's ear—"should they see us, we must cut our way through them," turning to the right.

The dog a third time barred the path.

"Are they there, too, Thorkil; by Holy Saint Bridget, they surround us like a ring. I believe we have fallen into the very centre of the *Campus Brigantium*," turning to the left.

He had not advanced many yards before he found himself hemmed in on every side, by a body of armed men, who "showed" among the trees in a circle, about fifty yards in circumference.

"Stand!" said the leader of the party, advancing towards the king, who stood in the centre of the circle, the dog beside him, snarling fiercely.

*This *Magh Breagh*, or "Magnificent Plain," was called, by Dr. O'Conor, *Campus Brigantium*, or the "Plain of the Brigands."

"'Tis he, 'tis he," exclaimed the robber captain; "we *have* him at last; close in."

No one moved out of the line, but the circle began to decrease in circumference.

Diarmaid raised his eyes to the Round Tower of Cill-dara, as a shipwrecked mariner looks at a distant rock, to which he must swim for his life. "Once there, and I am safe; I cannot fight a hundred men." The next instant he broke, like a lion, through his foes.

The instant after the forest resounded with the whooping of the whole pack of hell-hounds.

"Seize him! stop him! his soul to ——; cut him down before he gains the Tower, and the sanctuary of Cill-dara, or we are late."

One of the men stepped out to bar the way, and paid the forfeit of his temerity with his life.

Diarmaid was first in every manly exercise, and in fair running would have had no difficulty in outstripping his foes; but, in passing through the tangled wood, he stumbled and fell heavily, and before he could recover himself, the captain of the brigands—if brigands they were—had him by the throat. "Surrender or die," brandishing his skein in his face.

"There must be two to that agreement," thought Thorkil, seizing the captain with his teeth, in a very tender place.

The robber roared like a gored bull, sprang over his vanquished foe, and made his escape into the thicket.

The king rose to his feet uninjured, and renewed his flight. The old dog, who had bitten through cloak and hose, as nether garments were then styled, followed panting at his heels, to the gate of Cill-dara, a portion of the brigand's cloak between his teeth, of which he appeared as proud as a soldier who had taken the colors from the enemy. He laid the trophy at his master's

feet, who was hammering with the hilt of his sword upon the heavy oaken door of the monastery.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONASTERY OF CILL-DARA.

“Who comes there?” replied a voice from within.

“Open! open! I seek the protection of the Tower.”

“Enter, my son, and welcome,” replied a reverend monk, the Custodium of the *Cloictheach*, or Round Tower, who occupied a small building at its base; “none seek the sanctuary of the church in vain,” throwing wide the door; “here you are as safe as Noah in the ark,” dropping a heavy bar across it.

“*None?*”

“I know but one man in Ireland against whom the church of Christ would bar its door;” attempting to look beneath the stranger’s beaver.

“And who is he,” inquired the king, turning his face from the light of the lamp.

“*Diarmaid na n Gall*, king of Leinster,” said the monk, “a monster, accursed of God and mankind. What hast *thou* done, my son—murder?”

“Nothing.”

“*Nothing!*”

“Hark, they approach,” said the king, whose quick ear caught the footsteps of his pursuers; “put out that lamp, or they will see us through the lattice,” quenching it himself.

"Fear not, my son. Who comes there at this hour to disturb the pious at their prayers?" addressing the party outside, who were knocking heavily for admittance.

"Father, open quick!"

"Begone! I cannot open; what would you have?"

"The man with the dog, who fled hither just now."

"Think ye, base hinds, the church gives sanctuary to dogs? begone, I say, before I curse you."

"Where is the passage to the Cloicteach?"* asked the king, in a whisper to the priest.

"This way," opening a private door. "To the right, my son," pushing him through a dark passage.

"Open, holy father, open," cried the party outside.

"What would ye have?"

"The stranger, with the dog."

"What stranger?—confound this dog," re-opening the private

* *Cloicteach*, the ancient Irish name for a Round Tower. Dr. Petrie has at length *authoritatively* decided the vexed question of the origin and object of the Round Towers of Ireland (which have been so long the *cruces antiquarum*), in his splendid and very learned work on the "Ancient Architecture of Ireland." Sir Walter Scott, with his usual sagacity in such matters, says, "These towers might possibly have been contrived for the temporary retreat of the priest, and the means of protecting the holy things from desecration, on the occasion of alarm, which, in these uncertain times, suddenly happened, and as suddenly passed away." Colonel Montmerency says, "The pillar-tower, as a defensive hold, taking into account the period that produced it, may fairly pass for one of the completest inventions that can well be imagined; impregnable every way, and proof against fire, it could never be taken by assault. Although the abbey and its dependencies blazed around, the tower disregarded the fury of the flames; its extreme height, its isolated position, and diminutive doorway, elevated so many feet above the ground, placed it beyond the reach of the besieger. The signal once made, announcing the approach of a foe, by those who kept watch on the top, the alarm spread instantaneously, not only among the inmates of the cloister, but the inhabitants were roused to arms in the country many miles round."—*Dr. Petrie's Round Towers*, p. 376-7.

We are disposed to think these towers were also intended, like the Cities of Refuge among the Jews, as places of safety for all who fled to the church for refuge. In those days the sanctity of the altar was not sufficient to deter the avenger from slaying his victim at its very foot, or from using violence to carry him hence.

door; "in there, you ugly brute, after your master;" kicking him.

"Open, father, open."

"Well?" said the monk, flinging the outer door open, confronting the rabble.

"We want the stranger with the dog."

"Are you moon-struck, or has the dog bitten any of you?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Father Peter."

"Where is he?"

"We left him in the wood."

"What brought you to the wood at this hour of night?"

"We were watching the monastery flocks, lest those who came to the races might make prey of them."

"Well?"

"Then this man and his dog came prowling round the fold."

"Well, did he steal a sheep or hog?"

"No, your Reverence, but he committed murder."

"And if he did, the church offers protection to the guiltiest."

"But it was the chief swineherd he slew."

"What! slay a servant of the church;" with indignation—"why not tell me this at first. Who is he?"

"We cannot say, your Reverence; but Father Peter knew him, for he cried, 'tis he, 'tis he; seize him, cut him down before he gains the *Cloictheach*."

"Before he gains the *Cloictheach*, did he. Father Peter should know better. Well, you may go; and should you meet Father Peter on your way to the village, tell him I would speak with him at his leisure. *Pax vobis*," closing the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NUN AT ST. BRIDGET'S SHRINE.

Diarmaid groped his way in the dark, through a long winding corridor, and drew up before a door which yielded to a slight pressure from his hand, and found himself in the vestibule of the Monastery Chapel.

On the right and left of the altar stood the shrines of Bishop Conleath and St. Bridget, embellished with gold, silver, and precious stones; even kings crowns* depended above the sacred ashes of the Irish Virgin Saint.

Among the crowns and precious stones, shone the golden lamp, which contained the Inextinguishable Fire,† described by Giraldus Cambrensis.

Diarmaid, who appeared deeply impressed with the sacredness of the place, approached, like Moses, with unsandalled feet,

* The following description of those altars is found in the life of St. Bridget, by Cogitosus:—*In qua gloriosa amborum hoc est episcopi Conleath et huius Virginis Sanctae Brigidae corpora à dextris et a sinistris altaris decorati in monumenta posita ornatis, vario culti, auri et argenti et gemmarum et pretiosi lapidis atque coronis aureis et argenteis desuper pendentibus re-quiescent.*—*Trias Thaum pp. 523-4. Dr. Petrie's Round Towers, pp. 197-8.*

† *Inextinguishable flame*:—Giraldus speaks of the lamp thus:—“Apud Kildariam occurrit ignis Sancta Brigidae quem inextinguibilem vocant, non quod extingui non posit, sed quod tam solicite moniales et sanctæ ignem suppetente materia fonent et nutrunt, ut a tempore virginis per tot annorum curricula semper mansit inextinctus.” Girald. Camb. de mirabil. Dist 2, c. 34. The poet Moore refers to this lamp in the following lines:

“Like the bright lamp that shone in Kildare's holy fane,
And burned thro' long ages of darkness and storm,
Is the heart that afflictions have come o'er in vain,
Whose spirit outlives them, unfading and warm!
Erin! Oh Erin! thus bright, thro' the tears
Of a long night of bondage thy spirit appears.”

to see this great sight. He had advanced within a few paces of the Virgin's shrine, when he discovered he was not alone. A lady clad in sable attire, was kneeling before the altar—her pale face bowed to the ground :—

“ Before St. Owen's shrine,
That night, a lady watched—a sombre night,
With no sweet stars to say God heard, or saw
Her prayer and tears—the grey stone statues gleamed
Through the gloom ghost-like—the still effigies
Of knight and abbess had a show of life,
Lit by the crimson, and the amethysts,
That fell along them from the oriels;
And if you broke the silence by a step,
It seemed the echo lent them speech again,
To speak in ghastly whispers.
And the still sleet blast of midnight wind,
Moaning about the tombs, struck her
With fear down to the knees. That open porch
Brought more than wind, and whispers—there were steps
And form, which at the holy altar foot
Stood spectral in the spectral lights.
Ah ! Holy Mother ! and in his hand, the
Pennon of Sir Roland.” *

Diarmaid drew up, hastily, within a few feet of the lamp, which cast its light full upon him. She caught his footfall, turned quickly round, looked up in his face, uttered a piercing shriek—which rang through the chapel, the vestibule, along the silent corridors—and fell upon her face.

Diarmaid, through whose very soul, the sound vibrated, like a voice from the dead, trembled amidst the joints of his armour, and staggered forward; and, in so doing, brought his head into contact with the Inextinguishable Lamp, which fell upon the floor, leaving the church, altars, shrines, saints and sinners, in midnight darkness.

* Edwin Arnold.

He stood for a few seconds perfectly confounded, but soon summoning that fortitude for which he was so remarkable, stooped down to raise the fainting nun, but found the place she had occupied, deserted. Groping his way by the wall, he passed from the chapel to a private apartment, from which a muffled figure made a precipitate flight.

“Light! light!” cried the king.

“How came you in hither?” inquired the Custodium of the Tower.

“You told me to turn to the left.”

“To the right,” said the monk.

“Well, right or left, it cannot signify much. Here I remain, where I feel perfectly safe.”

“I am not sure of that,” said the monk, with evident uneasiness and chagrin.

“If I am not safe here, from both carnal and spiritual foes, where else, on earth, can it be found. Is not this the city, and this the very shrine of that holy virgin, St. Bridget, of which it is written, “Maxima hæc civitas et Metropolitana est, in cuius suburbanis, quæ sancta certo limite designavit Brigida; nullus carinalis adversarius, nec concursus timetur hostium.”—[Trias Thaum, p. 524, col. 1.]

“That is true of enemies, in general; but not of the enemies of the church; and had I known thou hadst slain the monastery shepherd, I doubt, whether I could have offered thee sanctuary at all.”

“The monastery shepherd is a wolf in sheep’s clothing; but I will, nevertheless, pay thee thy *eruic*. *

* *Eruic* or *eric*. The *lex talionis*, or the “law of retaliation,” was commuted by the church, at a very early period, which put a price upon the head of the person whose life had been lost. This penalty, in Ireland, was called *eruic*. It was similar to the *were*, or *wergild*, of the Saxons. The following incident, recorded by the Four Masters, illustrates the state of society, and the church’s

"That must be decided by the Lord Abbot; for the shepherd was a faithful servant, whose blood cannot be shed for nought."

"We shall arrange the matter with this," replied Diarmaid, placing a heavy purse in his hand.

The churchman's eye glistened, as he clutched the money, which was all new coin, struck in the mint of the Kingdom of Leinster. He then looked up at the donor, who rose considerably in his estimation.

"There is here, my lord, the purchase-money of a dozen hinds, such as thou hast slain."

"Well, thou canst arrange the purchase with the abbot; and employ the residue in prayers for the man's soul."

"Thanks, my lord; I would also remember the donor in my poor prayers. May I crave your name and title?"

"You will see the image and superscription on the coin."

The monk opened the purse, quickly, drew out a *sigal*,* and

mode of enforcing the *erucic*, about seventy years after the period of which our story treats. "A.D. 1244:—An army was led by Felix into Brefney. They encamped for a night at Fenagh-moy-rein [where there was a monastery.] The Coarb, or Abbot, was not at home. The troops set fire to the church buildings, in which the Coarb's alumnus, or ward was suffocated. The Coarb himself, on coming home next day, was greatly incensed at the death of his ward, and he demanded *eric* from O'Conor, who answered, that he would give him his own award. "My award is that you deliver up to me the very best man among you." "That is Manus," said O'Conor. "I am not," said Manus, "It is he who is head of the army." "I will not depart from you," said the Coarb "until I obtain *eric* for my ward." The army then marched out of the town, and the Coarb followed them. They proceeded to Ath-na-Cuirre, on the river Giercetheach; but the flood had then flowed its banks, and they were not able to cross the ford; so they then pulled down the chapel house of St. John the Baptist, for its materials. Manus called to the man who was on the top of the house, throwing it down. "There, said he," pointing up his sword, "is the nail that prevents the stick from falling;" while he was thus speaking, the rafter of the house fell down on his head, and fractured it, so that he died on the spot. He was buried outside the door of the church of Fenagh; and three times the full of Clog-na-Riogh, [the king's bell] together with thirty horses, were given as an offering for his soul;" and thus it was that the Coarb of St. Cailean, obtained *eric* for his ward." —*Four Masters*, vol. II. p. 311-13.

* *Sigal*. For the existence of Irish coined money, at a very early period, we can give no higher authority than Dr. Petrie:—"It appears certain that

read “*Bíarmid Ri na Lágean*.” As he uttered the words, he started, grew deadly pale, and let the purse fall from his clutch to the floor.

“ Well, what now ? ” said the king, smiling grimly.

“ Comest thou peaceably, my Lord Righ ? ” said the churchman, employing the words of the rulers of Bethlehem, who trembled at Samuel’s approach.

“ Yes, peaceably, or I should not come thus, alone ; but there is surely nothing warlike in the sight, or sound, of that metal,” pointing to the purse; “ but if I may judge from the conduct of the abbey’s shepherd, and from the remark made by thyself, I have more occasion to doubt thy sincerity, than thou hast to fear my anger. Can I trust thee for protection this night ? ”

“ My Lord Righ, you can. The church bears no malice ; and although sorely wounded in the person of its abbess—”*

“ Come, come, holy father, we must not re-open old sores : that occurred many years ago. I am not the only man who has

while the Irish had, from a very remote period, a mode of estimating the value of animals, and other property, by ingots, and rings, and silver of fixed weights, they had also two small silver pieces, the *scropal*, or *sigal*, weighing twenty four grains, and the *pington* weighing eight grains. The opinion relative to the origin of minted money in Ireland which has been hitherto, as I may say, universally adopted by numismatists, is, that it originated with the Danes, in the tenth, or possibly, in the ninth century, and, in this opinion, I confess, that I myself concurred, till my attention was more particularly drawn to the subject, by the discovery of the pieces of bracteate money, in the Round Tower of Kildare. On a recent examination of its interior area, in search of sepulchral interment, undertaken by my friend, the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Kildare, instead of human bones, as expected, five or six ancient coins were found, and from their position, there is every reason to believe they must have been deposited there at the original erection of the Tower. These coins are of that rare and curious class known to numismatists by the name of *Bracteati*, by which is understood thin laminar pieces, usually of silver, struck only on one side.”—*Dr. Petrie’s Round Towers*, p. 210, 219.

* A.D. 1135. “ The abbesse of Kildare was forced, and taken out of her cloisters, by Dermot Mac Murrough King of Lynster, at whose taking, he killed a hundred and seventie of the townsmen, and burned the house of the abbesse.”—*Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

caused a holy nun to forego her troth, pledged at the shrine of St. Bridget, and within the walls of Cill-dara."

"To whom do you refer, my Lord Righ?"

"I refer to Ailell Acher.* I might mention many other examples. But to turn to another theme; ye churchmen live more happily within these monastery walls than I imagined: this room, or cell, as you call it, is more delicately furnished than any apartment in my palace of Ferns. I should say it had lately been occupied by some fair nun, if I was not sensible of the general celibacy of your order, and that of the Custodium of the Tower, in special."

The monk smiled at the equivocal compliment; but looked neither self-condemned, nor confused.

"Does the Abbot of Cill-dara attend the Synod to be convened this year at Droichet-atha?" †

"So I understand, my Lord Righ."

"I am informed that Cardinal Johannes Papiron is instructed by the Pope to bring the case of priests' concubines, and lemans † before the synod."

* "On one occasion, the king Eoghanacht, set out to prey and spoil many territories, and Ailell Acher Agha, in his company, and they encamped in a certain mountain. There was a church of nuns near the place, i.e. Kildare, at this day. At midnight when all remained quiet within the camp, Ailell went to the church, when the Ban-airchinnech [or abbess] came out to ring the bell for midnight prayer, she met Ailell." * * * * *

"Unfortunate our meeting, said she."—*Vide the Wandering of Curack of Maeidium, translated by Dr. Petrie; Vide Round Towers of Ireland, p. 381.*

† Droichet-atha i.e. Drogheda. "According to the annals of Clonenagh, as quoted by Keating, this synod was held at Kells, in Meath, and not Drogheda."—*Dr. O'Donovan's notes to Four Masters, A.D. 1152.*

‡ A.D. 1152. "A synod was convened at Droichet-atha, by the bishops of Ireland, with the successor of Patrick, and the Cardinal Johannes Papiron, with three hundred ecclesiastics, both monks and canons; and they established some rules thereat, i.e. to put away concubines and lemans from men." Mr. Moore, who regards this synod as one of great importance, writes, "Besides the distribution of the palliums, the chief affairs that appear to have occupied the attention of the synod of Kells, were some enactments against simony and usury, as well as against the prevalence of marriage and concubinage among the clergy. It was surely unworthy of Dr. Lanigan, besides being short-

"It is high time it should be so, for the open concubinage of several of the clergy, is bringing the whole order into disrepute."

"Yes, in that, no doubt, the offence consists, the *open* concubinage of the clergy: such conduct shocks the prejudices of the ignorant. The monks of Cill-dara display more prudence in this affair than their brethren. I should never have suspected that the Custodium of the Tower had a fair companion to cheer his solitary cell if—"

"What mean you, sire?" said the priest, turning actually pale.

"If I had not seen a pious nun escape from the apartment as I entered."

"Did you *see* her?" inquired the priest, with anxiety.

"No, I was not so fortunate: I saw but the hem of her garment, as she fled in haste."

The monk breathed more freely. "Shall I now conduct your majesty to the church tower; for I cannot promise you protection in any other part of the abbey."

"Lead on," said the king, who was too sensible of the necessity and importance, of such a place of safety, to hesitate for an instant in taking possession of it. They entered the first loft of the tower, through a trap-door, by the aid of a ladder, which could be drawn up, if necessary. The apartment was provided with some simple articles of furniture, among which was a bed, upon which the king cast himself. "Now tell me, sighted, as a matter of policy, to suppress all mention, as he has done, in his account of this council, of the above enactment, of the marriage and concubinage of the clergy. He has himself, in another part of his work, (chap. 32, &c. 8,) referred to some canons of the Irish church, relating to the marriage of monks and clerks, which, combined with other proofs, leaves not a doubt, that on this point of discipline, some of the Irish clergy followed the example set them at that time by their reverend brethren on the Continent."—*Vide Moore's History of Ireland, vol. II. p. 191, and Dr. O'Donovan's Notes to Four Masters, A.D. 1152.*

monk," said he, "is the Reverend Father Lawrence O'Toole in the monastery?"

"Yes, my Lord Righ; but he leaves in the morning."

"For where!"

"For Glendalough."

"Then I shall accompany him. Awake me early. You may now go—carry the lamp with you."

"But, my Lord, I can descend without it."

"But I prefer being left in the dark."

CHAPTER IX.

SPIRITS OF DARKNESS.

There is nothing in darkness to scare the mind of a man who is in the habit of calmly communing with his own thoughts. He fears not to give wings to his imagination, and penetrate beyond the ken of common minds. But timid souls, like ancient mariners, who never ventured out of sight of land, tremble to cross, even in imagination, the mysterious straits which separate us from the world of spirits:—

"But timorous mortals start and shrink,
To cross this narrow sea,
And tremble, shivering on the brink,
And fear to pass away."

Still there are things which make even brave men tremble in the dark, and call lustily for "light!" Eliphas, the Temanite, gives a graphic description of the effect of such upon himself:—
"In thoughts, from the visions of the night, when deep sleep

falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my flesh stood up, it stood still ; but I could not discern the form thereof—an image was before mine eyes—there was silence, and I heard a voice.” [Job. iv. 13-16.]

Diarmaid, whose iron frame and resolute mind were overwrought by the exercise and excitement of the previous day, turned from side to side, and sometimes started on his pillow. He was dropping asleep with his face towards the queen of night, who was passing in and out of white clouds, when it struck him, in his half unconscious state, the sour “old man in the moon,” had changed to a lovely woman, and the white clouds to flowing drapery. He made an effort to arouse himself, and succeeded, and to his amazement found a pale, but beautiful face, bending over him. He attempted to address it, by name, for the image was not unknown to him, but the words stuck in his throat :

*“In felix simularum atque ipsius umbra Creüsæ
Visa mihi ante oculos, et notâ major imago,
Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox fancibus hæsit.”*

Before he could summon sufficient courage for the occasion, the sprite had vanished from his side. He looked around him, but it was gone. “Could I be mistaken in that face ! Was I dreaming ?” He lay trembling in every fibre, each moment expecting the re-appearance of the ghostly visitor, till the moon sunk behind the neighbouring mountains, leaving him in total darkness. By and bye, his quick eye distinguished an object *darker* than night itself, hovering above him, in the bed. It appeared, to his excited imagination, of sufficient dimensions to fill the chamber. There was but one being in existence, who could assume *that* shape and appearance. It must surely be the

devil. “Avaunt, foul fiend!” exclaimed the king, covering his face with the bed-clothes,—it is a positive fact,—and there he lay, in a profuse perspiration, like a man in the ague. By and bye he felt something descending on his feet. He could endure this no longer. Springing up, with fearful excitement, he aimed a heavy blow at it, and struck the air, and the next instant received a deep wound in the face, from which the blood flowed freely. Leaping out of bed, he drew his sword, and commenced cutting and thrusting, right and left, through the chamber, without encountering anything more supernatural than a heavy bench. He kept careful watch through the night, and when the morning broke, could see nothing in the room, to explain the why, or the wherefore, of these visions of darkness.

CHAPTER X.

THE “AVIS BRIGIDÆ.”

Three mules stood at the abbey gate: one for the abbot, a second for the king, and a third for a monk, called Father Peter, a strong burly looking churl, with red hair and small eyes.

“Where is my dog?” inquired the king of the Custodium.

The Custodium looked at Father Peter for an explanation.

“You will find him in the penitents’ cell,” replied the holy father.

“Loose him this instant,” said the king; “of what crime has the poor brute been guilty, to merit confinement?”

The dog, on regaining his liberty bounded up to his master; but the next moment charged, with fury, after Father Peter.

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed Diarmaid, it is not the first time that you two have met.

Down, Thorkil, down! Do not strike the dog, priest. Where was it you and that dog met before. Stay, remove this hood a little back,—“pushing it back with his own hand”—by the mass, the brigand who attacked me in the wood last night! Is he one of your fraternity?” addressing the Custodium of the Tower.

“He has been useful in guarding our flocks,” replied the priest, evading the question.

“By St. Bridget, but you deserve hanging,” holding the burly priest, or brigand, by the collar. “If your brethren be such as you, the monastery must be a nest of robbers and cut-throats. How dared you assail me, villain? What did you take me for?”

“A thief!” replied the priest, boldly.

“A thief!” repeated the king, who seemed pleased, as well as surprised, at the man’s boldness. A thief! Ha! ha! ha! What! do you think I came to steal your swine?”

Father Peter replied by a grunt, and a shrug of the shoulders, and moved forward, leaving the king to interpret his dumb signs and sounds, as it suited his pleasure.

“Who is that fellow?” inquired Diarmaid of Lawrence O’Toole, with heightened curiosity: his skein was within an inch of my throat, last night, when he was seized by the dog. I have seen his face before.”

“He acts as chief shepherd to the monastery.”

“He is nothing better than a brigand. I wonder, much, the church should employ such characters.”

“We must meet force, by force, my Lord Righ, and assail our enemies with their own weapons.”

This is all fair, where *enemies* are concerned; but this scoundrel, and his companions, assailed me, unarmed and alone,

as I approached the abbey. I am aware that on the banks of the Rhine, monasteries, and bishops' palaces are no better than robbers' caves, or castles ;* but I did not know till now, that such practices were encouraged, or winked at, by the Abbot of Cill-dara."

"Nor are they, my Lord Righ," replied the reverend priest, with honest emphasis.

Why not punish the scoundrel, and send him from the monastery. I sought the sanctuary of the church tower, last night, where I thought myself as safe, as in my palace at Ferns ; but this, or some other scoundrel, must have found access to the loft.

"Impossible, my Lord Righ. He was without the walls all night. What was it you saw ?"

"As I lay, with my eyes open, a black object hovered over me, as it were, in mid-air. I thought it was the foul fiend. Think you, could the enemy of mankind assume such a shape ?"

"Any shape, whatever ; he can change from black to white, like a chameleon ; and in that he hovered over your bed, in mid-air, he is styled, in Holy Writ, 'the Prince of the power of the air' ; and a 'Lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may destroy ;' we are, therefore, enjoined by the Apostle Paul, in the sixth chapter of the Ephesians, to 'put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ; for we wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness, of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'"

* "A large proportion of the rural population lived by robbery (*quorum magna pars latrocinio deditur*) their castles, as the ruins still bear witness, were erected upon inaccessible hills, and in defiles, that commanded the public roads. An Archbishop of Cologne, having built a fortress of this kind, the governor inquired how he was to maintain himself, no revenue having been assigned for that purpose. The prelate only desired him to remark that the castle was situated *near the junction of four roads.*"—*Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. II. p. 133-4.

"*High places!*" repeated the king: "then think you, father, is there greater danger of meeting the enemy of mankind in high places, than on low ground!"

"So the words of the holy apostle seem to import, my son."

"Then, by the mass, I'll never spend a second night in a church *tower*; for had I not laid lustily about me, I had been overcome."

"Laid lustily about thee! Thou surely dost not mean, that thou didst contend with the arch-fiend, bodily."

"That I do, of which I bear the mark; see here"—raising his beaver from his brow; "*you* should know the print of his claw, whom you say goeth about like a destroying lion"—exposing the wound on his forehead.

The abbot, after examining the wound for a few seconds, burst, to the surprise of the king, who looked sober enough, into a hearty laugh.

"By St. Bridget, I see nothing to laugh at, father."

"I understand it now," replied the abbot, wiping the tears from his eyes—"these are the marks of the falcon's claw and beak; thou wast assailed, through the night, by St. Bridget's Bird."*

"St. Bridget's Bird! What mean you?"

"It is a miraculous and holy bird, which has dwelt within the tower, since the time of St. Bridget."

"Why dost thou call it holy and miraculous?"

"It is of miraculous age, and holy also, inasmuch as it dwells

* Dr. Petrie, speaking of the Round Tower of Kildare, says, "That this tower was, in the twelfth century," [*i.e.* the period in which our story is laid,] "considered as of antiquity even so great as the time of St. Bridget, most plainly appears from a story told by Giraldus, of a hawk, which was thought to have frequented its summit from the days of the patroness. The story is as follows:—A tempore Brigida falco quidam egregius locum istum frequentabat, qui Ecclesiastice Turris summitati insidere consueuerat Unde & a populo avis Brigida vocabatur, & in veneratione quadam à cunctis habebatur."

alone, like a holy hermit, or the immaculate virgin, St. Bridget, who reared the shrine; for when its mate, at the time of incubation, pays her annual visit, the falcon drives it hence; but should the female succeed in making good her entrance, the *Avis Brigidæ* flies with her to the cliffs of Glendalough, whither we are now wending our way. As a holy father, who describes the conduct of the bird, writes, ‘*Circa templam quod frequentabat, parem non admittebat: sed amoris tempore procul inde secedens, & apud montana de Glindelaghan ex consuetudine parem inveniens, naturæ indulgebat.*’* I shall point you to the cavity—now called St. Kevin’s Bed—as we pass it. Some imagine that bird is St. Kevin himself; and others assert it is possessed by the immaculate spirit of the holy virgin, St. Bridget, whose shrine it inhabits, and whose name it bears.”

“If so, she has the devil’s claws,” soliloquised the king, placing his hand on his face. “Well, what is your opinion?”

“The question is difficult of solution. As the bird is a *male*, I should be disposed to think it was St. Kevin, rather than St. Bridget; but there may be no gender after death; but the doctrine of transmigration of souls is not sanctioned by church canons; still there may be miraculous exceptions. It is the opinion of others that St. Kevin is made to perform penance in this form, for the murder of the poor maid, he cast into the lake.”

“Kathleen is perhaps the female bird?”

“By no means an improbable conjecture.”

“I have heard of this story before, but concluded it was no more than an idle tradition; will you rehearse it?”

“St. Kevin, in his youth,” began the priest, “loved a beautiful woman, named Kathleen, who adored him in return; for the saint himself had the face and form of a holy angel; but feeling

* Dr. Petrie’s Round Towers, p. 208.

himself divinely called to the service of the church, he fled from the face of his betrothed bride, to the wild rocks and lakes of Glendalough. But what can surpass the love of woman! She found him out, though he lay hidden in the cavern of a rock, as difficult of access as an eagle's eirie. One night, as he lay watching the moon, shining in her beauty, like the church to which his soul was eternally wedded, he saw what he first imagined to be two stars descending from heaven, above his bed. He raised himself, in holy admiration, to see 'this great sight,' and as he did so, heard a whisper in his ear, and felt a soft hand on his shoulder. It was the hand and voice of Kathleen, whose eyes he mistook for stars. Starting from his bed in terror, he cast her from him, into the lake beneath."*

The king mused over the story, as he rode in silence by the side of the holy father; and more than once, asked himself, whether the first object which startled him from sleep, in the round tower, was the pale shade of his wife, the queen; or the moon in her silver drapery of clouds. "Think you, father," he at length inquired, "was it lawful in the saint to violate his faith to Kathleen. I opine with thee, that the male bird must be St. Kevin; and his mate, which drives him from the tower of Cill-dara, to the cave of Glendalough, can be none other than the fair Kathleen, whom he cast into the lake."

"I did not give it as my positive opinion, my Lord Righ, that

* We learn from Moore, that Kathleen's eyes were of the "most unholy blue." The poet thus describes the cruel conduct of the saint:—

"Where the cliffs hang high and steep,
Young St. Kevin stole to sleep.
'Here, at least,' he calmly said,
'Woman ne'er shall find my bed.'"

He was never more mistaken in his life. At that moment Kathleen was bending over him:

"Ah! your saints have cruel hearts!
Sternly from his bed he starts;
And, with rude, repulsive shock,
Hurl'd her from the beetling rock!"

the male bird was St. Kevin; but should this actually be the case, I see no objection to your idea, that the spirit of Kathleen may have been transmigrated into that of the female bird; but I speak *ex cathedra*.”*

“I should be more disposed to think that it was the beak and talons of the heartless St. Kevin, who assailed me last night, than the nails of the poor mild maiden, Kathleen. But think you not, that churchmen are hereby taught the sin of celibacy; one of your own order being the judge. To quote the words you have just employed, *circa templum quod frequentabat, parem non admittebat: sed amoris tempore procul inde secedens, et apud montana de Glindelaghan ex consuetudine parem inventiens, naturæ indulgebat.*”

“Thy wit is pleasant, my Lord Righ; and thy speech ingenious; but hast thou inquired of thine own heart, why thy sleep should be disturbed by visions of the dead, in animal or human shape?” asked the priest, fixing his dark eyes upon the king, with a penetrating glance, which struck conviction through his inmost thoughts.

“I spoke not of human shape, father,” said the king, looking up from beneath his eye-brows.

“Thou didst see nothing, then, save the Bird of Bridget, in thy chamber last night.”

“Nothing, I believe, but the moon: but me-thought her face looked sad.”

The churchman hemmed, and meditated, and hemmed again. He then turned to his companion, and said, “we remain for the night at Glendalough; but as it is your wish to leave early in the

* After writing the above, I fell upon the following traditional anecdote, told by a Wicklow guide to Mrs. Hall: “Of all the saints, St. Kevin had the worst taste. He ran away from a poor blue-eyed lady, to gloomy Glendalough, were she found him, they say, *through the flying of a dove that lit upon her shoulder.*”—Hall’s Ireland, vol. II. p. 209. note.

morning, we shall ride down to the Lakes, where I shall point you to St. Kevin's Bed."

Diarmaid was not satisfied to view this holy place from the opposite side of the lake; he must needs dismount, climb the cliffs, enter the cavern, and lie down in it. "And do you tell me, holy father, that St. Kevin dwelt, for years, in that damp cave, in which a man of my size, could not stretch his limbs?"

"It is an established fact, in church history, my Lord Righ : '*S. Coemgenus i.e. St. Kevin exivit ipse ab eis solus ad superiorem ipsius vallis partem, quasi per unum milliarium à monasterio, et constituit mansiunculam ibi in loco angusto, inter montem et stagnum sibi, ubi erant dense arbores et clari rivuli, et præcepit Monachis suis, ut nullum ciborum cibi genus darent; et nemo ad eum veniret, nisi pro maxima causa.'*'"

"And did he die in that 'loco angusto,' or diabolical hole?" inquired the king, shrugging his shoulders.

"No, but here he lived for a number of years, *solus, in jejuniis et vigiliis continuis, sine igne sine tecto; et habetur incertum, utrum radicibus herbarum, an fructibus lignorum, sive cælesti pastu, suam sustentavit vitam; quia ipse nemini indicavit hanc quætionem;* when a number of holy men came to this neighbourhood, attracted hither, by the fame of his piety; and built the Seven Churches, and the monastery where we shall spend the night—as the historian of the church says, '*Et post prædictum tempus, multi sancti convenientes, duxerunt S. Coemgenum de desertis locis invitum; & fecerunt eum habitare cum suis Monachis in prædicta cella; ibique S. Coemgenus semper voluit habitare, & ad Christum migrare; adhuc jam illic inter Fratres satis strictè visit.*'"*

They hastened from the cave to the monastery, where they

* Vita S. Coemgeni Die tertia junii, c. iii. Acta Sanctorum, tom. i. p. 315.
Vide also Dr. Petrie's Round Towers, p. 172.

were hospitably entertained, Father Peter having prepared the Abbot of Glendalough for the royal guest.

Do you style this *inter fratres satis strictè vivens?*" inquired the king of O'Toole, in a whisper, as he marked the rich repast spread out before them. "This may be *satis strictè* among churchmen, or *fratres*, but I should style it *satis luxuriosè inter reges*. I blame not their patron saint, for leaving his cave, and *radicibus herbarum et fructibus lignorum*, or even his *cælesti pastu* for this; for, by St. Kevin, they live better here than I do at Ferns."

"You mistake, sire, if you suppose the sons of the church fare thus sumptuously every day; for *you*, they have 'killed the fatted calf.'"

"*Calf!* do you call this?"

O'Toole smiled, and showed his sense of the brethren's kindness, by partaking heartily of their good cheer.

"I never tasted richer venison. What would you call it, O'Toole?"

"*Cœlestis pastus*, my lord," replied the good priest, filling his mouth with the rich fare.

The king laughed heartily and followed his example.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TEMPTATION OF THORKIL—FATHER PETER'S OATH.

But we must turn back to Father Peter, whom we have described as a burly priest; and who kept at a civil distance from the king and Father O'Toole, as they rode from Cill-dara to Glendalough; sometimes riding considerably in advance, and

at other times falling as far behind ; but whether before or behind, accompanied by Thorkil, who watched him as closely as a modern detective does a thief. "Take care of yourself, I have my eye on you," he seemed to say.

Father Peter made several attempts to open a friendly communication with his canine companion, but to no purpose. He dismounted and called him, but the dog, who preserved a space of about twelve yards, as neutral ground, between them, stood like a post.

The holy father drew a few steps nearer. Thorkil snarled and showed his teeth. The monk halted at the distance of about six yards, put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a piece of meat, the perfume of which affected the poor brute's olfactory nerves ; it was savoury meat such as he loved. He wagged his tail, and allowed the priest to approach three steps nearer, (leaving a space of three yards between them,) and then began to snarl. "Thorkil, fine fellow ; good dog!" holding out the meat. The hair rose on Thorkil's back, as he snarled, "Bad man."

Father Peter ventured to protrude one leg another step, which, by bending down, enabled him to bring the savoury meat within a few inches of the dog's nose.

Was ever dog so tempted before ; for the day was far advanced, and Thorkil hungry ; but he resisted nobly, turning his nose in the air. The priest, losing all patience, tossed the posset to him, and withdrew. Thorkil smelled it, turned it over with his nose, drew back from it a few yards, made a circle round it, and bolted off at a tangent, in pursuit of his master the king.

"I believe the son of a bitch suspects it is poisoned," said Father Peter. "See how he looks backs at me. Ha ! you—. He would tell his master his suspicions, if he were able."

As we have, perhaps, said enough to excite the reader's curiosity respecting this holy man's purposes, we may as well tell here all that can be told of him, up to this period.

The king, Father O'Toole, and Father Peter, lodged that night at Glendalough. The following morning before they departed, Lawrence O'Toole called Father Peter aside, and thus addressed him :—"Do you remain at Glendalough?"

"No, I purpose to accompany the king of Leinster to the North."

"You know where he is going, then?"

"I suspect it."

"And I suspect your purpose to be anything but friendly, and cannot allow the king to depart without informing him."

"Informing him of what?"

"Of your hostile intentions. You dogged him to Cill-dara last night, and attempted his life."

"Of which he is aware; and if he now permits me to accompany him to Brefney, I do not see that you should interfere."

"Neither would I, if I did not believe your intentions to be hostile. But how know you he will permit you to go with him?"

"I have no hostile intentions," replied Father Peter, smiling; "but if he does not allow me to go, there is nothing to dread."

"Of that you must give me satisfactory proof."

"What proof do you require?"

"Your oath; you must swear by the bones of St. Kevin, by the virgin's altar, by the saint's holy bed; by the church of St. Peter and St. Paul; by our Lady's chapel;* by the great Bell in the Tower of Glendalough, by the Combh and Staff of St.

* The churches of St. Peter, and St. Paul, and our Lady's *chapel*, were, (excuse the Irish bull) among the "Seven Churches," of Glendalough.—Hall's Ireland, vol. II. p. 219.

Patrick, that you will not injure, or conspire against the life, or person, of the king, your lord and ruler."

"He is no lord or ruler of mine ; but how long will this oath bind me."

"I cannot say. It *should* bind you for life."

"For life ! Then I'll never swear it."

"Then I must inform the king who you are."

"If I swear that I will do him no injury for six months, will that satisfy you ?'

"Say twelve, and I shall make no objection to your accompanying him ; but why you should wish it, I cannot imagine."

"That may be my secret, or whim. Well, I shall bind myself, by the holy oath, for twelve months."

"Then follow me." He conducted him to the altar, and received his oath.*

"Thou mayest now depart; and may the Holy Virgin give thee grace, to keep thy faith to God and man."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEMPTATION OF ST. LAWRENCE.

The king of Leinster, whose mood seemed again sad, or serious, paced, in silence, the refectory of Glendalough. Though

* Nothing was more common at this period than oaths of this kind. Hundreds of instances might be given from the Four Masters. In the annals of Clonmacnoise, under date, 1139, (recté 1143), we read, as follows :—"King Teriagh took Morrogh O'Melaughlyn, king of Meath, prisoner, after he [had] agreed with him, that each of them would be true to one another, and seek none advantage, or hindrance of another. These were the oaths and sureties that were between them, of either side, for performance of the said agreement, viz :—the altar of St. Keyran's shrine, the relieks Norannagh, two prelates, of every severall houses, together with Moriegh O'Duffie, Archbushopp of Connought, the primatt of Ardmach, the staff of Jesus, which St. Patrick brought to this kingdom, the cowarb of St. Fechine, Saint Fechin's Bell, and the *Bobas* [bell] of St. Kevin."

silent, he was not alone. In the same apartment sat the Right Reverend Father Lawrence O'Toole, whom we have not yet described. An Irish historian says, "In person, he was tall, graceful, and of a comely countenance; a man of unbounded charity, and eminent for piety and patriotism."*

"Dost thou attend the synod, to be convened at Drogheda?" inquired the king, who was the first to speak.

"No, my Lord; I have no business there."

"Thou hast heard that Cardinal Papiron brings four palliums from the Pope?"

"So I am given to understand."

"If those palliums were distributed according to merit, I know of a worthy priest, who should receive one."

"Who is that?" inquired O'Toole, raising his mild face with innocent curiosity."

"*Lorcan O'Toole*," was the king's emphatic reply.

The good priest flushed up to the forehead, and said, "I pray you, my Lord Righ, say not so: the holy father acts in these affairs with wisdom and impartiality."

"*Impartiality*, do you say? Think you not that O'Conor was consulted respecting Tuam, for his foster brother is to get the pallium. The MacCarthy, I understand, has recommended Domnald O'Lorgain, for Cashel; and MacLoglin swears that Gelasius shall have the pallium of Armagh."

"What of Dublin?" inquired O'Toole.

* Dr. Lanigan, in his Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, vol. iv. p. 174; and Mr. Moore, in his History of Ireland, vol. II. p. 308, state that Muirechertach, the father of St. Lawrence, was prince of Imiale; "but this," says Dr. O'Donovan, "is as great a mistake, as that of the author of St. Lawrence's life, who makes him a son of the king of all Leinster; for O'Toole was at this period Lord of the tribe and territory of Hy-Muireadhaigh, called Omurethi by Giraldus, comprising about the southern half of the present county of Kildare, to wit, the baronies of Kilkea and Moone, Narragh and Rheban, and a part of the barony of Connell."—Dr. O'Donovan's Edition, *Four Masters*, A.D. 1180, vol. II. p. 53.

"I intended that for thee," replied the king: but here the Pope has decided otherwise. Gregory, I hear, is to receive that pallium; and you, father, must acknowledge, if the right of presentation be sanctioned in any instance, I have a claim on Dublin."

"Yes, my son, I do; for thou didst found there the Abbey of the Blessed Mary of Hoggis,* for the canons of St. Augustine; and thou hast a better claim to the allegiance, and chief kingship of the city, than O'Conor, or MacLoughlin O'Neill.†

"The power of the O'Conors in Connaught, and the O'Neills in Ulster, is great; but, I believe, it is now on the wane; and there are agencies in operation to decrease it still farther," said Diarmaid.

"To what agencies do you refer?"

"I am now on my way to Tara, where I expect to meet Melaghlin, to decide on the boundary of the new kingdom."

"New kingdom! What mean you. Does the father descend from the throne, or divide his inheritance with the son?"

"He divides the kingdom of Meath, and receives in lieu of East Meath, the South of Brefney, composed of Longford, the West of Cavan, and the South of Leitrim."

"But what says O'Rourke to the dismemberment of his principality?"

"We have not consulted him. O'Conor, with whom he lately disputed a pass on the Shannon, at Athlone, and MacLoughlin, have arranged to concentrate their forces, with those of Leinster, to drive him back to his mountain fortresses, in the North."

* "Dermod MacMorrrough, king of Leinster, founded an abbey in Dublin, called after the Blessed Mary of Hoggis, for regular canons of St. Augustine." — *Ware de Antiq. Hib.* cap. 26. p. 351.

† In the Annals of Ulster, and Cloamacnoise, for A.D. 1161, we read that Dermot caused the Danes of Dublin to give him a tribute of 1200 cows, and acknowledge him as king.

The good priest sighed deeply as he heard this news, and exclaimed, "War! war! horrid war! when will the time, predicted by the holy prophets, come, that men shall learn the art of war no more! Methinks I see in all this—or at least in the part thou dost take—a remembrance of the old grudge thou bearest the prince of Brefney, for marrying thy betrothed bride. I had hoped the youthful fire of that passion had died within thy bosom long since."

"Whatever dies within my bosom, revenge for the wrong done me by Tiernan O'Rourke will never die; nor my gratitude to young Melaghlin, whom I hope soon to see the crowned king of Tara; of which he is more worthy than his father. Did he not plead with the old man for me and his sister, at the hazard of his life, as Jonathan did with Saul?"

"May I enquire the cause of your midnight visit to Cill-dara?" asked the priest, who grieved over the permanence of Diarmaid's passion for O'Rourke's wife, and his inveterate hate of her husband.

"Why do you ask?"

"I have reasons for so doing; and God grant," said he, with pious fervour, "my surmises may prove correct."

"I went there, hoping to meet you, in the first place."

"And, in the second place."

"To inquire concerning another, whom you—I believe—confess."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the good man, raising his hands and eyes to heaven in holy adoration. "My prayers are at length heard."

The king looked surprised, and asked the churchman to explain.

"Ah! my Lord Righ, thou knowest what I mean. Thou wentest to Cill-dara to see, and inquire concerning——." Here

he whispered a name in Diarmaid's ear, which caused him to start as if an adder had bitten him.

"How dare you name that name to me! Hear me!" continued the infuriated monarch, whose passion rose as he proceeded, causing his face to flush and his eye-balls to flash fire—"Hear me," he cried again, seizing the venerable priest by the vest, which tore in his grasp—"Dare to breathe, or even whisper that name in my ear again, and I dash thy brains out against the wall"—flinging him from him with a force which caused the old man to reel and stagger.

The pious countenance of Lawrence O'Toole expressed neither fear at the king's threat, nor indignation for the indignity done his person; but it looked wan from sorrow and disappointment. He seemed, for the moment, unconscious of the monarch's presence, and sighed heavily, as he said, "I thought he went to Cill-dara to—but God's will be done. After whom dost thou inquire?" asked he, looking up, with a mildness which reproved the fiery wrath of the king.

"Dearforgil, the Princess of Brefney, for thou art her confessor."

As he uttered this name, the brow of O'Toole grew as black as a thunder-cloud, an unusual fire sparkled in his calm eye; his bent form grew erect, and dilated to majestic proportions; he approached the monarch, who actually shrank back before him—

"When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or looked more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been."

"And dare *you*, Sir, my Lord, to put such a question to *me*. I *am* the confessor of the Princess of Brefney, but thou art not *mine*."

"You mistake me, you mistake my motive altogether, father. I seek not information which it would be mortal sin in you to communicate, and sacrilege in me to hear; but I held thee for that lady's *friend*, as well as confessor, and, as such, would ask thee of her happiness and health."

"Think no more of her, sire."

"Think no more of her! It is easy to say so, father. Tell yonder stream not to flow in its old channel; tell your heart not to beat; will they obey thee. But can't thou say whether O'Rourke still treats her harshly?"

"I believe she lives apart from him, in a lonely island near——"

"In a lonely island near where. Speak, father."

The abbot, who felt he had gone too far, replied, "The matters of which thou dost inquire are beyond my province. I am the lady's confessor, but nothing more."

"But where is this island, father. Tell me of her place of abode, and I swear to thee, by the relics of St Kevin, thou shalt be the Archbishop of Ath-cliath" [Dublin.]

"Get thee hence, Satan!" replied the priest, gathering his garments round him, turning on his heel, and walking with princely dignity from the refectory.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PHOOKA.

In what way Father Peter got himself appointed squire, groom, or guide, we have no means of learning; but of the fact

of his filling one, or perhaps all of these offices, about the royal presence, there can be no doubt; for there he stood, the morning after the dialogue recorded in the last chapter, by the heads of the mules, waiting for the king, his master, to mount.

“Lead on,” said Diarmaid, addressing this honest man, who seemed rather disposed to hang behind. But, at the king’s command, he applied the whip to the mule’s sides, and rode forward, followed by Thorkil, the dog.

“That dog seems fond of you, father,” said the king, smiling.

“Tis a faithful brute, my Lord,” replied the priest, turning his head half round, leering maliciously at Thorkil.

Thorkil showed his teeth, and snarled.

“You filled, while at Cill-dara, the office of shepherd,” said the king.

“No, my Lord Righ; I was only swineherd. They called me *Peadar na Muc*.” [“Peter of the Pigs.”]

“Swinherd, was it? A mean office for a person of your intelligence.”

“I cared not for the meanness of the office, if the wages were good.”

“Do you belong to the monks of Cill-dara?”

“No, my Lord.”

“To what order then? Are you a secular or a regular priest?”

“An *Irregular*, my Lord.”

“An Irregular! I never heard of that order before. Are you a priest or a bandit? Speak, and fear not.”

“Something of both,” replied Peter of the Pigs, with an audacious grin.

“You went to the chariot races of the Curragh to cut a purse, if opportunity offered?”

“Or a throat, my Lord, if opportunity offered.”

"You speak plain."

"I would not deceive your honor, for the world."

"Right! Can I trust you then?"

"If you pay me."

Diarmaid smiled, reached him a purse, heavy with gold, (which Peter clutched with avidity,) and said, "Know you anything of the inmates of Cill-dara?"

"The monks, or nuns?"

"Know you of a lady, who inhabits a cell, near the base of the Round Tower?"

"Nothing," replied the guide, with an emphasis which caused the king to doubt his veracity, in this instance, at least.

"Are you sure, now? If I find you practising deception upon me, I will slay you on the spot."

There was a fierce and vindictive sparkle in the eye of Father Peter, which seemed to defy the royal threat, but his reply was submissive enough; "My Lord Righ, I would not deceive you. I know nothing of the lady of whom you inquire; but if your Lordship would mention the name of the holy nun, mayhap, I have heard it."

"It matters not," replied the king, riding on in silence. "It was, no doubt, the shadow of the moon; but that Bird of Bridget so distracted my thoughts, I knew not what I was about."

The road took a north-westerly direction, through a dreary solitude, along which rush a succession of rapids and waterfalls, terminating in a whirlpool of fearful depth, known to County Wicklow Tourists, as the "*Phoul a Phooka*." *

The evening was closing in as they approached a wicker

* "*Phoul a Phooka* is the name given to a succession of cataracts, one hundred and fifty feet in height, over which the waters of the river Liffey are precipitated. In a whirlpool of unfathomed depth, the Spirit Horse, or Phooka, holds his nightly revels, lurking to draw unhappy wayfarers into the frightful vortex."—*Hall's Ireland, Vol. II., p. 200.*

bridge, thrown over the river, just above the whirlpool. The king looked down the boiling cauldron, and then up the rapids, where the white maned billows leaped from rock to rock, foaming and smoking in the race. "What is that in the distance?" inquired he, pointing to a misty object, appearing and disappearing, among the rocky windings of the torrent.

"Where?" asked Father Peter, with evident uneasiness: "I see nothing." Nor did he, for it had disappeared.

"There it is again," said the king; but while he spoke, the misty curtain was drawn around it. "It was like a horse."

"A horse!" exclaimed the priest, in terror.

"Yes, a horse! Are you afraid of a horse?"

"O! my Lord; it is the Phooka, or *Spirit Horse*; let us run."

"Run, you fool! See, there it is again: I believe it is an ass."

"An ass, my Lord? What color is it?"

"White."

"White! O! Holy St. Bridget! it's the Phooka."

"Stop, you fool: there is some one, in black, riding it."

"It's the Phooka, it's the Phooka—with the devil on its back."

"Hush you noisy blackguard, or I'll throw you over the bridge—I think that's a lady on the ass' back. Stay quiet there; we shall see, by and bye."

The horse, ass, or Phooka, disappeared in a rocky winding of the road. The king waited long for its re-appearance; but waited in vain.

"Perhaps it plunged into the river, my Lord. It swims like a fish."

"May be so," said Diarmaid, spurring his mule across the bridge. "I believe this is a land of dreams and visions," mused he, taking the path through the wood.

"We had a great escape, my Lord," said Peter of the Pigs, drawing up to his side.

"What did you fear, you fool?"

"If the Phooka should take me on his back——"

"If the Phooka be a horse of any spirit, he would never let a filthy swineherd like thee, mount him."

"The saints be praised! '*Where there's muc there's luck*,' as Father Shaun says."

"But, I may be wrong," replied the king, "for they say the devil has an old partiality for pigs."

"For *goats*, my Lord: the abbot of Cill-dara says, that on the day of judgment, all the wicked, on the left hand, will be changed into goats; the Lord bless us and save us. But I never heard any thing to the prejudice of the pigs."

"Did you never hear their flesh was unclean?"

"Never. On the contrary, the monks of Cill-dara are very fond of bacon. The abbot would prefer a good ham to a leg of mutton, or a haunch of venison."

"Did the abbot ever explain to you, how fifty legions of devils took possession of a herd of swine, that ran down a steep place, into the sea?"

"Down a steep place. Was it the Phoul a Phooka?"

"The Sea of Galilee."

"I never heard tell of it. Is it in Ireland?"

"No, in the Holy land."

"The Holy land! think of that: your lordship knows more than Father O'Toole."

"Hark! what's that?" exclaimed the king, drawing up his mule.

"What did you hear, sir, my Lord?" inquired Father Peter, in trepidation.

"Silence, you scoundrel,"—listening attentively—"I knew I was right. I hear horses' feet."

"Sir, the Phooka! run! for your life," exclaimed the priest, riding up behind and giving a skelp to the king's mule, which caused it to start from the beaten track, into a thick jungle.

"How dare you! you cowardly brute," exclaimed the king, when he had succeeded in bringing his beast to a stand—"how dare you raise your hand against my mule"—holding his whip above his shoulders: but before the blow descended, Father Peter had fallen to the ground, where he lay snuffing Pater nostres, Hail Marys, and Holy St. Bridgets, as charms against the Phooka.

"Be still," said the king, "if you don't want him to hear you."

This hint produced its effect. After waiting for about ten minutes, they distinctly heard the breaking of dry twigs, and a movement among the boughs; and shortly after saw a white object leisurely approaching, upon which a figure, in black, was seated. It stopped opposite to the spot where Diarmaid and his companion were concealed, poked in its red nose among the trees, and brayed.

"Ha! ha! ha! exclaimed the monk, or Custodium of the Round Tower of Cill-dara, riding up, "your ass, my lady, sees something among the trees."

At this moment, the king's mule, between whose legs, Father Peter lay entranced, responded to the assine salutation, in a sound between a neigh and a bray.

"Art thou sure, father, that the king and his companion, are in advance of us?" inquired the lady on the white ass.

Diarmaid started at the sound of her voice.

"What should detain them in the wood, my lady? Father Peter is acquainted with the road: they are doubtless by this time at the abbey. It will be late before we arrive there," replied he, giving a smart whip to the lady's ass.

The king sat in his saddle for nearly a quarter of an hour, musing in silence, with his own thoughts, from which he was at length aroused by the heavy snoring, or snorting of his guide. "Up you brute," touching him with his toe, in the ribs.

"Pather nosther, qui es in cælo, ita etiam in terrorem Phookiorum, salve Domine," replied the priest.

Having neither smelling salts, sal-volatile, burned feathers, or any other modern appliance to arouse the holy father, he tried the effect of his armed heel on his buttocks: "Up there," cried the king, with an application of the spur, which drew blood like a modern cupping-glass.

The priest started to his feet, and rubbed his —— and then his eyes.

"Well?" inquired Diarmaid.

"Did you see it, my Lord, O! King?"

"See what, you fool?"

His *ears*, my Lord, his *ears*! they reached to the tops of the trees; and his *eyes*, my Lord, his *eyes*, were like flames of fire; and his *nose*, my Lord, his *nose*! Holy St. Bridget, *what a nose!*

"He smelled you, no doubt."

"It was, as your honor says; the smell of the pigs that saved me."

"May-be-so: come up; and proceed."

The night was far advanced, when they arrived at the religious house, where they had previously arranged to lodge.

Diarmaid inquired of the janitor if any other strangers had come to the monastery that night.

"No one, my Lord," was the reply.

"Why do you Lord me?" inquired the king sternly, for he suspected that the man lied.

"It is our habit with strangers of noble mien, and port like thine. If I have offended, I beg you will pardon my ignorance."

"Did not one of the monks of Cill-dara, arrive here, about an hour ago, with a lady?"

"No, my—sir."

"Lead the way," said the king. He was conducted to an apartment which denoted preparations for a noble guest.

"I move in the midst of mysteries and enigmas, of which I am as ignorant as a traveller in an Egyptian temple," mused our hero. "I suspect these priests are playing me false, for surely my ears have not conspired with my eyes to deceive me. Be she dead or alive, I never heard a voice more like hers. Can her spirit's voice, as well as her features, haunt me thus? Who is that?" starting to his feet, in terror, and springing towards the door. A sable figure, which eluded his grasp, disappeared amidst the windings of the corridor. Diarmaid pursued, and groped about, with distended arms and fingers. In a niche, in the narrow passage, stood a dark object. He laid his hand upon it, and exclaimed, "Who art thou? Lights here."

"Your lordship should know me without a light," replied Father Peter of the Pigs.

"Is it you? Why do you stand there? Begone, sirrah," returning to his chamber; where we shall leave him, and accompany Father Peter to a more retired part of the building.

A midnight lamp cast its murky light through the key-hole of the door of the apartment before which our burly priest stood. He bent down and looked through the aperture, and having satisfied himself respecting the occupant within, laid his thumb on the latch and entered.

"Welcome," said Father John, the Custos of Cill-dara, who was supping on a pair of barn-door fowl, and a tankard of ale: "Have you supped yet?"

"I never sit down to supper till I have finished the business

committed to my care: where did you leave the lady of whom you were in charge?"

"In her own apartment."

"And, hell and fury, know you not that she wandered from her apartment to the king's side, as he lay in the Tower of Cill-dara."

"She will do so no more."

"She has been, this moment, at his door."

"You say not so?" exclaimed Father John, in terror.

"I *do* say so; and if I had not been present to cover her retreat, and throw myself in his way, all had been out. What brought you after us at all?"

"She insisted on coming; and the abbot of Cill-dara, after advising against it, told me to bear her company, saying, I was to be directed by you in my future movements."

"My advice is, that you return in the morning whence you came."

"She will never consent to that. She insists on proceeding as far as Tara; and I need not inform you that *her* word is not to be gainsayed."

"It must be gainsayed in this case. I would not for a thousand sigals she met Diarmaid, or he recognised her. If they meet, evil will come of it. Evil to us all. There will be blood shed, and the blood be on your head. He saw you on the bank of the waterfall to-day; and it was by feigning fear of the Phooka you escaped. As it was, he heard you both speaking. Her voice made him start in his saddle; and well it might."

"What shall I do?" said the Custos, hesitating. "She insists on following you both to Tara."

"Refuse to carry her."

"I dare not."

"Dare not! What do you fear?"

"She has such a commanding aspect: the abbot himself gave way to her will. Will you see her yourself?"

Father Peter thought a while, and then replied, "Leave the matter to me; I will see her to-night."

That he succeeded is evident, for only *two* persons accompanied the king from the religious house; Father Peter himself, and a young priest, who asked permission to travel in his train. I can give little or no description of this young man, inasmuch as he kept his hood drawn close round his face, which was fair and delicate.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BROTHER AND LOVER.

The young priest kept considerably in the rear, which Diarmaid observing, drew his rein, and waited for him to ride up.

"*You* are going to Tara?" said the king, addressing him.

"Yes, my Lord."

"You had better loose your hood, for the day is warm."

"I have weak eyes, my Lord."

"And a weak voice too. Where do you come from?"

"From the monastery of Holy St. Bridget, at Cill-dara."

"Then it was you I saw following us by the water, I mistook you for a woman. You passed us in the wood last night, though the porter said you had not arrived."

"We travelled by the river side, and through a wood; but did not arrive at the religious house till after your lordship."

"Have you lived long in Cill-dara?"

"Not long."

" Do you know the names of the nuns?

" Some of them; there is Sister Angelica, Sister Theresa, Sister Mary Joseph, Sister Anastasia, Sister Agatha, Sister Mary Magdalene, Sister ——"

" You have a sister Mary Magdalene, have you? Have you ever seen her?"

" There is no intercourse between the brethren and holy sisters. We only meet at prayer."

" You may see them there."

" We meet not there to see, or be seen, my Lord."

" But still, you have eyes."

" Not to look on women."

" Do you know the history of any of the holy sisters?"

" I have never asked."

" There is one—I believe you rise in the night for prayer—there is one who spends hours before the shrine of St. Bridget. Can you inform me who she is?"

" I cannot," replied the priest, with emphasis, looking round at Father Peter, who had quietly ridden within earshot.

" Did you ever hear the monastery was haunted?"

" With what, my lord?"

" With the spirits of the departed."

" Never."

" Are you afraid?"

" Of what?"

" Of ghosts."

" No; I fear the living more than the dead"—looking fearfully at the king, from beneath his hood.

" You shall sleep in my room to-night, for I verily believe, since I have left Ferns, I have been bewitched."

The young priest gave a start of surprise, and after recovering

sufficient composure, replied, meekly, "I will lie at your lordship's door."

"No, no; in my room"—was Diarmaid's decided reply.

"*I* will sleep in your room, my Lord," broke in Father Peter.

"*You!* you poltron; you who trembled from head to foot, at the sight of that ass," pointing to the animal the young priest rode.

"Your Lordship will find me as brave as a lion, when out of this neighbourhood."

"Where there is no danger, you are, no doubt, courageous. But we are losing time in converse, and, if benighted, we may see the Phooka again," giving whip and spur to his mule, taking the lead for Tara.

At Tara, Diarmaid made no delay—neither shall we, as we hope soon to visit it again. He took it, *en route*, to West Meath and Longford, where the forces of the confederate kings were concentrated, for carrying out their purpose of dismembering Brefney, and enlarging the boundaries of Meath. This was accomplished without opposition—its Prince, Tiernan O'Rourke, (sensible of his utter inability to compete with the united forces of Ulster, Connaught, Leinster, and Meath) betaking himself to his mountain fastness and wild lakes, till the destructive tempest had exhausted its fury.

The forces of Leinster and East Meath were resting, with their prey of wild cattle, in the neighbourhood of Rathclune, at no great distance from Lough Ree.

"Diarmaid," said Melaghlin—the young, handsome, and somewhat portly king of East Meath, or Tara—as he marked the steady and anxious gaze of his friend, whose eye was intently fixed upon a small castle standing on an islet in the midst of the lake—"Diarmaid, I think I read your thoughts."

' The king of Leinster started, while his bronzed face shone with the glow of heated metal.

" Don't deny it," continued Melaghlin, laying his hand affectionately on his friend's shoulder, " you were thinking of my sister—of Dearforgil ?"

" I was, replied Diarmaid, with excitement : " can you blame me ? Are you sure that is the castle, where she is confined ?"

" Quite ; and if you knew what she has suffered there, for the last two years, you would make an effort to release her from her cruel thraldom."*

" Make an *effort !*" exclaimed Diarmaid, in a transport of surprise. " I would give my life, to do so. Have I your approval for breaking the yoke which binds her to that cruel and accursed monster, Tiernan O'Rourke ?"

" You have. I was ever opposed, as you are aware, to her marriage ; but my father, with the natural timidity of age, fearing to anger O'Rourke, or his friend O'Conor, who are dangerous neighbours,† yielded an unwilling assent."

" But she protested against it ?"

" To the *last* : at the foot of the very altar—to which she was led an unwilling sacrifice. And even *there*, sought—but sought in vain—the protection of the priest—for he was a friend to O'Rourke."

" O God ! that *I* had been there. But, think you, she will accompany me ?"

" Where ?"

" To your palace near Tara. Where else ?"

" I have no doubt of it; but there, she would not be safe.

* " She was procured and induced by her unadvised brother, Melaughlyn, for some abuses of her husband, Tyernon, [O'Rourke] done to her before. A.D. 1152"—*Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

† " A wicker bridge was made at Ath-luain [Athlone] by Roderick O'Conor, for the purpose of making incursions into [West]Meath."—*Four Masters*, A.D. 1159.

No, Diarmaid, if you take her from her present abode, you must carry her to Leinster."

"To *Leinster!*"—with surprise and confusion.

"Yes. Half measures will not do here."

This sudden surrender of his sister to the arms of his friend was more than Diarmaid's most sanguine dreams could have pictured. He stood like one spell-bound. "Have you considered the consequences of such an act—to your sister, I mean?" he at length inquired.

"I have; and believe her love for you is such, that she would follow you to the end of Ireland. I should willingly carry her with me to Meath, were I able to protect her from O'Rourke and O'Conor; but you know my inability. I have but just been established in the kingdom of East Meath by the swords of O'Loughlin, O'Conor, and yourself. My father would not receive her. He fears O'Conor; who, for his own ulterior views of conquest, has consented to the dismemberment of Brefney, to increase the possessions of the king of West Meath.* He will find it easier, by and bye, to wrest this part of Brefney, or Meath, from my father's feeble hand, than from the iron grasp of Tiernan O'Rourke—wolves do not prey on wolves, while there are sheep in the fold—these possessions have been transferred but for a time. But you, who are strong in the fastnesses of Leinster, may defy both O'Conor and O'Rourke. From O'Loughlin you have nothing to apprehend."

"I fear not for myself, replied Diarmaid; and if I thought your sister——"

"You have nothing to apprehend there."

"When do you return to Tara?"

"In a few days."

* "They took Conmhainne (*i.e.* the present county of Longford and the southern half of the county of Leitrim) from Tighearnan Na Ruaire, after having defeated him."—*Four Masters*, A.D., 1152.

" Well, should I succeed in persuading your sister to accompany me to Leinster, we shall see you on our way to Ferns; but this is an affair which demands more of craft than force; for although O'Loughlin [the king of Ulster] is my friend, and might wink at the elopment of the princess, the king of Connaught would oppose a union between your family and mine. I agree with you he has an eye on Meath."

" It must, therefore, be done with great secrecy. No one need know whither she has fled. You should not appear yourself in the affair, for yours is a face and figure—no matter how disguised—which once seen is never forgotten. Do you know any man of prudence, among your forces, whom you could trust?"

" Not among my forces; but I have been accompanied from Cill-dara by a young priest, who seems possessed of remarkable caution, so much so, that to the present moment I have not got a full view of his face, though we occupy the same chamber at night."

" What is he? a priest, do you say?"

" Yes, a young priest."

" The very best person to employ in an affair of this kind, provided he has no penchant for the lady himself, in which case I would hold him as the worst."

" I believe so. I shall speak with him to-night."

" You have no time to lose."

" Well, farewell, till we meet; when, I hope——"

" I hope so"—smiling, and nodding.

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING MAKES A DECLARATION IN THE DARK.

Diarmaid did not open his mind, or explain his wishes to the young priest, who occupied a corner of his chamber, till he had quenched the lamp. Whether this was the result of caution or modesty, we know not—for brave men are often as modest as they are brave, approaching actual danger with greater nerve than an *affair de cœur*.

After hemming and hawing, and turning round on his pillow, he addressed his chamber companion thus:—Father Eustasius, are you awake?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Were you ever—hem—"

"My Lord?"

"In love?"

The modest young divine started in the bed, and blushed to the temples, though it was quite dark—his heart palpitating, as if it would leap out of his bosom—but he replied with caution—"What do you mean, my Lord Ragh?"

"Oh! If you do not know what I mean, it is evident you never were in love; and, therefore, can neither feel for, nor sympathise with others."

"It is our office to sympathise with all the sorrows of humanity."

"Would you, therefore, call love a sorrow?"

"That depends on circumstances."

"Oh! I see you know something about it."

"Speak, my Lord: if I can aid you—for I see your mind is ill at ease—I shall do so."

"Well, in a word, Father Eustasius, I am in love."

The heart of the young priest beat fast; but he spoke slow, and calmly—"With whom, my Lord Righ?"

"Can I trust you, father?"

"You can"

"On your solemn oath?"

"On my solemn oath."

"Swear it."

"By the Holy Virgin. Speak"—rising on his pillow, in the bed.

"With *Dearforgil*, the Princess of Brefney."

The priest fell back on his pillow, as pale as a corpse. He remained silent for several seconds, breathing heavily.

"Do you hear me?" inquired the king, who expected some remark on his declaration.

"Yes."

"Yes what?"

"Yes, my Lord Righ."

"What do you think of it?"

"I know not what to think."

"Well, I love her; and intend to carry her with me from this neighbourhood, to Ferns."

"Where is she?"

"Confined, as a prisoner, in an island of Lough Ree."

"Did O'Rourke leave her behind?"

"He thought but of his own safety in escaping our hands."

"Where is he?"

"God knows. Perhaps a hundred miles away; or hiding among some of the neighbouring mountains and lakes. Can I depend on you to aid me?"

"I thought the king of Leinster had a married wife?"

"She's dead."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes: I saw her spirit. It was fear of that caused me to ask you to sleep in my chamber. She has haunted me since I left Ferns."

"You never loved her?"

"Never. I never loved any woman but Dearforgil, who was betrothed to me, before her marriage with O'Rourke."

"Did she return your love?"

"She did."

"But married another?"

"She was compelled to do so, by her weak-minded and heartless father, O'Melaghlin."

"In what way do you wish me to aid you?"

"You must visit the island, and see by whom she is guarded; gain the confidence of her keepers; and, if possible, deliver a message from me."

"When do you wish me to do so?"

"To-morrow."

"I shall be prepared."

Here the interesting dialogue terminated. After the lapse of half an hour, the king slept calmly; but the young priest did not close his eyes that night. When Diarmaid awoke, which he did at an early hour, he found his clerical companion had left the chamber. "He is already at work," soliloquised the king. "There is no one like a priest, as Melaghlin says, for conducting an affair of this kind: they steal after their prey with the caution of a cat. If he succeeds, I'll make him bishop of Ferns. Where's my dagger? Could the priest have taken it? He is right: there may be danger. But he might have asked permission."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ABDUCTION.

Dearforgil, the Princess of Brefney, the daughter and sister of a king (of the royal house of O'Melaghlin), sat in a deep embrasure of a window, in a small square apartment, of the *Caislean na Nua*,* on the islet of Lough Ree. The evening sun was shining on her golden hair. She raised her dark eyes from her tapestry frame, looked beyond the waters of the lake, which surrounded her dwelling like a silver zone, and said, "Nedha, come hither."

Nedha approached hastily, for she had narrowly marked the princess' steady gaze across the lake.

"See you that *cairbh*?"†

"Where, lady?" inquired Nedha.

"There, beneath the trees. See, two men approach! They enter."

"I see," said Nedha; "they are, no doubt, fishers."

"I think not, Nedha. I saw the sun glinting from the helmet of the tallest. May the virgin protect us, I hope it is not O'Rourke."

"The saints forefend! I will go to the battlements," replied the maid, hastening from the apartment, "and let your highness know."

The boat was pushing out from the shade of the trees, as Nedha gained the summit of the castle, from which she waved a red flag, at the appearance of which it quickly returned to the covert of the shore.

* *Caislean na Nua*, "Green Castle." † *Cairbh*, "Boat," or small ship.

"Well, Nedha, what do you make of it? You seem to have frightened it back again."

"I cannot, as yet, say; but hope it is not O'Rourke."

"The Holy Virgin forbid!"

"It might be some of the people of O'Conor, O'Loughlin, or, *the King of Leinster*," said Nedha, emphasising the last name, and watching its effect on the countenance of Dearforgil.

"True: this part of O'Rourke's principality again forms a portion of my father's kingdom."

Then you are no longer prisoner, and should, while the opportunity offers, make good your escape from that savage prince."

"Nedha, remember the Prince of Brefney is my husband."

"That is the reason I hate him."

"Hush thou *caireog* :* the servants may overhear thee; and I cannot trust them all. Come closer, Nedha."

Nedha approached; went on her knees; placed her arms in her mistress' lap, and gazed into her face, with an expression of mingled pertness and affection.

"Thou art a ——." The princess hesitated, smoothing the hair on her fair maid's forehead.

"*Cairin cais*,† thou wouldest say."

"Out with thee!" slapping her cheek.

Nedha caught her hands, held them firmly between her own, and looked up earnestly, and anxiously in her face; and as she did so, two large tears started from her dark eye-balls, ran quickly over her cheeks, and fell, like pearls, upon the princess' hands.

"What ails thee, girl?" inquired Dearforgil, in surprise.

Nedha laid her face in her mistress' lap, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

* *Caireog*, "Prating wench." † *Cairin cais*, "Pretty darling."

"Thou art a strange girl! For what dost thou weep?"

"Nothing," said Nedha, laughing, as she flung up her head.

"Thou can'st not deceive me, Nedha: what is it?"

"I was thinking," said Nedha, looking deeply into her mistress' eyes, "if,"—she weeps again.

"Well child, 'if' what?"

"If thou were carried hence—I should die—for I could not live without thee;" and a third time she laid down her head, and wept aloud.

"But why shouldest thou think so, silly girl? and if I were, thou should'st accompany me; for there is no one living, who loves, or cares for me, like thee; or whom I love, like thee," kissing her.

"*No one?*" inquired Nedha, looking long and curiously into her mistress' face. "Think again."

The princess blushed slightly, but still replied, "*No one.*"

"I thought there was *one*," said Nedha, timidly, but slyly; "one who loved, and *still* loves thee, truly."

"Of whom do you speak?" asked the princess, with a deeper flush upon her brow.

"Need I mention the name of *Diarmaid, King of Leinster?*"

"What of him, child?"

"You saw a boat on yonder shore, before the sun went down?"

"Yes, what of it?"—trembling.

"The sun you say, glinted from the helmet of the tallest of the two men?"

"Yes, who was he? speak!"—terribly excited.

"*The King of Leinster!* He is now on the island. I saw him land. He now waits below, to see thee, and bear thee hence."

Dearforgil fainted.

Nedha barely waited her mistress' recovery, and then hastened

to the margin of the lake, and approaching a thicket, which had been previously appointed, as a place of rendezvous, called, in a whisper, "Father Eustasius, Father Eustasius."

"Here, *mo coleen dhas*," replied Father Peter, taking her in his arms—kissing her with a smack, like the crack of a pig-driver's whip.

"For shame, Father Peter," replied Nedha, "what a noise you make: the king must have heard you: where is he?"

"At the boat. Well, has the princess consented?"

"Now don't torment me; but let me see the king of Leinster."

"You will find him beneath the rocks, near the boat."

The damsel approached, addressed a few words to the king, and then led the way to the castle.

It was late that night before Diarmaid left Dearforgil's apartments, bearing on his arm a muffled figure, followed by Nedha, and Fathers Peter and Eustasius. They entered the boat; but in attempting to push out from shore, found it, to their surprise, made fast to a tree, by a strong iron chain; and as Father Peter fumbled with the links, a party rushed from the thicket, crying, "Treason! treason! To the rescue of the Princess!"

"How is this?" exclaimed Diarmaid, drawing his sword, and rushing upon his assailants, who made way before him—those who escaped uninjured, seeking shelter among the trees. Five minutes had not elapsed before the whole party—which consisted of some dozen hinds, hastily called together, and indifferently armed—were dispersed, or sprawling on the beach.

Another blow broke the chain, which bound the boat to the shore. "Now, Dearforgil: there is not a moment to lose"—taking her hand. "What is this? *Blood!*"

The blood was running in a rapid stream down her hand and arm.

"Are you wounded?" looking fearfully into her face.

“Yes, but, I hope, not dangerously.”

“Where?”

“Here, in the shoulder. He aimed for my heart. Nedha will dress it.”

“Who did it?”

“Father Eustasius.”

“Which way went he?”

“I know not. That will do, Nedha. He has but scratched my shoulder.”

“Thou art a brave soldier,” said Diarmaid, addressing the princess. “Treachery! treachery!” continued he, as he paced the beach. “How do you feel now? Allow me to bear you to the boat.” They entered and rowed safely across the lake.

“Welcome,” said Father Peter, who was awaiting them on the opposite shore.

“You here, sirrah; and the princess wounded.”

“I ran to seize the castle boat, my Lord Righ; or our enemies had been on us, ere this.”

“The castle boat! Thou art a thoughtful knave. Now for the chariot. Can you bear the driving, dear Dearforgil?”

“O yes, let us depart,” ascending the chariot.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PURSUIT.

The blue morning star was shining in the east, as a chariot, containing four persons, entered the kingdom of East Meath, crossing the Boyne Water, between Clonard and Trim.

The fugitives had travelled all night, with their faces towards the sun, but had not, as yet, seen the golden manes of his horses

streaking the horizon; or felt the breath of their nostrils warming the chill air.

The first grey streak of dawn was announced by the distant, but distinct bay of a blood-hound; directing—there could be little doubt—a party in pursuit.

Dearforgil, who heard the bay, started in terror, and exclaimed, “Diarmaid, they come; we are lost.”

“Fear not, Dearforgil: I have not entered on this enterprise without counting the cost. Peadar na Muc, look back and tell me what you see.”

Father Peter obeyed, and replied, “Nothing, Righ.”

The nearer and more distinct baying of two dogs, and the sound of horses’ feet, warned them that their pursuers were not far distant.

“Look again, sirrah,” said the king, whose duty of charioteer demanded his utmost vigilance.

“I see something like a horseman crossing the top of the mountain.”

“May the Holy Virgin protect us! what is he like, Father Peter?” inquired Nedha. “Is it the prince?”

“Well, sirrah, what else?” asked the king.

“I see a second, Righ.”

“Well?”

“I see a third.”

“Well?”

“I see a fourth, and a fifth;—phew! there are twenty, thirty, forty, fifty of them.”

The king looked back, and said, with something of surprise, “And they are nearer than I thought. Dearforgil, I know you can ride on horseback: we have often ridden together.”

“I can, I can,” replied the princess, with animation, who, at

that moment, would sooner have mounted the Phooka, than have fallen into the hands of her enraged husband.

“We can gain the border of yonder forest, before they come up,” said Diarmaid, drawing in his foaming steeds. He placed the Princess of Brefney on one of the leaders, and sprang to the back of the other; leaving Peadar na Muo to do the gallant by Nedha; and, to do him justice, he performed his part with more speed, tact, and knightly courtesy, than could have been expected from a man of his profession, or appearance. But they had scarcely time to mount before the Prince of Brefney’s blood-hounds were biting at their heels.

This, under certain circumstances, might have proved a disadvantage—or, at least, an annoyance; but as Father Peter had neither whip nor spur, to apply to the horses’ sides, he rather preferred the bay, or bark, and occasionally snap of the dogs’ teeth at their fetlocks and haunches :—

“For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie pressed,
And flew at Tam wi’ furious ettle:
But little wist she Maggie’s mettle:
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail.”

Maggie was a fortunate mare, compared to Father Peter’s horse, at whose tail thundered the fierce Prince of Brefney; with battle-axe in hand, not unlike the pictures we so frequently meet of his English cotemporary, or knightly frere, Richard Cœur de Lion. The battle-axe made but one circuit in the air, and fell, with a crash, on the head of——

“Poor Father Peter!” you exclaim.

No, the blow merely grazed his crown—carrying off his leathern cap, or helmet—descending on the neck of the horse. The priest, who had a quick eye, bobbed his head, and dropped

beneath the belly of the charger, in the very nick of time—so much so, that O'Rourke thought—for it was still barely twilight—that he had slain both man and beast. And mistaking his victim (who was well disguised) for the king of Leinster, and the muffled female for his own wife, the Princess of Brefney, “Take,” said he, addressing one of his people, “this lady into your custody, and conduct her back to Lough Ree. I am sure my cousin, O’Conor, and the father of the princess, knew nothing of this abduction.”

“What shall we do with the king’s body?” inquired another of his followers—looking down on Peadar na Muc—who lay beneath the wounded steed, half smothered in its blood.

“Leave it to the vultures and wild dogs,” replied O'Rourke, wheeling round his war-horse, and giving the command to his men to follow him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEDHA’S VANITY AND FATHER PETER’S PHILOSOPHY.

Women *have* vanity, and Nedha was no exception to her sex: and notwithstanding the distressing and perilous position in which she found herself, felt as vain as the jay in borrowed plumes, at being mistaken for her mistress; and fidgetted in her seat like the crow, in the fable, as a young Irish knight—at whom she had, on some previous occasions, set her cap—approached, and respectfully addressed her, as “my lady,” and “your highness.” If, therefore, no other motive, save love of homage and admiration, had influenced her, she would have preserved her incognito intact. But, in acting the fine lady, she

was compelled, much against her will, to repel the civilities of the handsome cavalier who rode at her side, by requesting him, with all the dignity she could assume, to "keep his proper distance in the rear." This rather unpleasant alternative could not be avoided, for had he caught but one sparkle of her dark eye—and her eye *would* sparkle—or one stray lock of her raven hair, which often strayed and wantoned in the wind—the charm would have been broken. Never was maiden more perplexed, or more sorely constrained, against her will, to veil her charms, than Nedha.

But we should be doing this faithful servant a cruel injustice were we to imagine it was merely from vanity, or any other personal consideration, she continued to act the princess. Nedha loved her mistress as she loved herself. She knew the brutal character of the man who called himself her husband, who had kept her a close prisoner in a lonely island, from the day he had constrained her, by the threat of dethroning her father, to bow her knee at the hymeneal altar. She now, therefore, rejoiced that the imprisoned bird had escaped the hand of the fowler, and was winging its flight to the shelter of her brother's throne, in Tara. The longer, therefore, she was able to act the princess, the better for the princess herself.

Judging from exterior appearances we could never have imagined that a feeling, even akin to vanity, could find a place in the heart of Peadar na Muc. Vanity is a sort of light, fairy elf, that loves to trip about the chambers of young and innocent hearts, and as Father Peter was not young,—that is comparatively speaking—but cunning, we conclude he had no fairy chambers in his heart: but we must here record the fact, that when he heard one of O'Rourke's followers ask, "What shall we do with the king's body?" he felt it a proud moment in his existence. To be mistaken for a king! and for so fine a man as the king of

Leinster ! It would be difficult to describe *what* he felt. How long such feelings might have detained him beneath the belly of the horse, we cannot say, for while he thus glorified himself, his ear caught the flap of a vulture's wing descending on its prey, which put his proud and ambitious musing to flight, and caused him to start up with the exclamation, "*A living dog is better than a dead lion.*" You are a philosopher Father Peter.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEDHA TURNS NUMISMATIST AND MAKES A DISCOVERY.

Nedha was occupying her mistress' rooms, acting the part of the Princess of Brefney. She refused to allow any living soul access to her private apartments. This was attributed, by some, to contrition for sin, by others, to sorrow for Diarmaid's fate. But this acting could not be continued much longer. A servant brought a message from O'Rourke, that the princess was to prepare, by the morrow, to depart for the North of Leitrim. She knew not how to make, or avoid making, the denouement, or exposure, and trembled to meet the wrath of the prince.

" O Father Peter ! if you had escaped, you would have helped me out of this dilemma. May the saints in heaven have mercy on your soul !"

She heard a movement at her elbow as she spoke, and turning quickly round, saw Peadar na Muc standing before her, with face and hands all bloody, and hair stiff and clotted with coagulated gore.

Nedha screamed and almost fainted, for she firmly believed that he had been brained by O'Rourke's battle-axe. " O ! Holy

Virgin, is that you, or is it your ghost ! Speak, or I shall scream again."

" Whist," said the priest, with his finger on his mouth.

" O Father Peter, dear, what brought you back. I thought the prince had killed you. You are covered with blood. Where are you wounded ? In the head ?"

" No," said he, looking into her face, with all the pathos he could assume ; " but *here*," laying his hand on his heart.

" In the breast ?"

" In the heart"—pathetically.

" In the *heart*! I thought that was mortal. Is the wound deep ?"

" Very."

" Was it the prince's battle-axe that struck you ?"

" No."

" One of his men ?"

" No, but one of the princess' maidens."

" I do not understand you. What is her name ? How did she wound you ?"

" Her name is *Nedha*. She wounded me with her eyes."

" For shame, Father Peter ; a holy man like you, and this is no time for joking, and I going to be carried away to Leitrim in the morning,"

" I came back to carry you with me to Meath to-night.

" To the princess ?"

" Yes."

" You are a darling ! But what a dirty face you have. Will you let me wash it ?"

Peter smiled acquiescence, and Nedha commenced operations.

" Now, Father Peter, I cannot wash you, unless you behave yourself. Do I hurt you ?"

" Scrub away *ma coleen dhas*"—drawing her down on his knee.

Having removed the clotted blood, mire, and ingrained dirt, which lay in beds of strata, one above another, she observed a white skin where she expected to find a yellow one. Or to change the figure, she found silver instead of copper, or brass, beneath the rusty gangrened metal; and what pleased and surprised her even more—for she was no antiquarian or collector of old coins—perceived the “piece” was of a more modern date, and the head and features “better cut,” than she at first imagined. “What a fair skin you have! You are a younger man than I thought! See, here’s a silver *torc* inside his shirt! Who are you?”

“I am *now* the servant of the king of Leinster; but before, was the swine-herd of Cill-dara.”

“I don’t believe it.”

“Don’t believe what?”

“That you were *ever* a swine-herd.”

“Why?”

“Your skin is too white; and swine-herds don’t wear *torcs*.”

“White! Pigs’ flesh is white, my pretty blackbird.”

Nedha was puzzled. While she mused, Father Peter started up, and said, “We leave this for Tara, at twelve o’clock tonight.”

And to Tara we now proceed, in search of the fugitives.

CHAPTER XX.

TARA.

Tara! Scone! The very sounds call up the ghosts of warlike kings, of men in rude armour, with begrimed faces, and gory hands. Here a Bruce and there a Brian.—But

“The harp which hung in Tara’s halls,”

was hanging on the willows of the Boyne for centuries before the time of Brian Boru.

Tara is supposed to have derived its name from *Tea*, the Queen of Heremon. Having seen the mound of Tephi, while in Spain, she caused a similar mound to be raised in Ireland, as a sepulchral monument. And being buried here, it was afterwards called *Tea-mur*,—“Tea’s mound,” or Tara :—

Relate to me, O sages learned,
Whence Temor got its name ?
Was it in days of Partholan,
Or when the Ceasair came ?
'Twas once a beauteous hazel wood,
In time of famed Olcan ;
And next, 'twas called the “ Hill of Liath,”
And waved with corn for man.
When “ Cain the Prosperous,” arose,
It bore the victor's name,
Until the coming of Crofnn,
A lady of bright fame.
As stars that shine, ere morning dawn,
Or moon rise from the sea,
All hide their heads, at her approach,
Who bears the name of *Tea*.
And when she sank, like setting sun,
Beneath the western wave,
A radiance hung around her name
That lumинates her grave.*

The next piece is a correct version of an original poem on the same subject :—

“ It gave great happiness to the women
When Temor the strong was erected,
And the daughter of Lughaidh obtained
A hill on the plain, deserved by a lover.

* We have given in the verses above, a *very* free translation of an Irish composition called *Dunneanchus*. See Books of Leacan and Ballymote. For the more correct and verbal translation see Four Masters, with notes by Owen Connellan, Esq., p. 294.

The dowry which the wife of Geide requested
 Of her husband, as I have learned,
 Was a delightful fortress for noble dwellers,
 Which she soon with skill selected.

A dwelling, which was a stronghold and fortress,
 The best of mounds which could not be demolished;
 Where after her death was Tea's monument,
 Which event perpetuated her fame.

The gentle Heremon here maintained
 His lady, secured in the fortress,
 And she received from him all favours she desired,
 And all his promises to her he fulfilled.

Bregia of Tea was a delightful abode,
 It is recorded as a place of renown,
 And contains the grave of the great Mergech,
 A sepulchre which was not violated.

The daughter of Pharaoh of many champions,
 Tephi, the most beautiful that traversed the plain,
 Here formed a fortress circular and strong,
 Which she described with her breast-pin and wand.”*

Tara, which was first set apart, as a place of sepulchre, became in time, a “place of assembly,”
 “The fortress of Tephi, where met the assembly.”
 and the residence of Irish kings.

Cormac’s† palace, at Tara, which appears to have been the most magnificent of any of our ancient kings’ residences, is described by various Irish historians. It was styled Teach Miodhchurta, which signifies the “House of Banquets,” or the “House of Conventions,” and Teach na Seach, the “House of Heroes.” It was three hundred feet long, eighty feet wide, and fifty feet high. It contained numerous apartments: the royal bed-chamber, we are told, had “fourteen doors.”

* See Four Masters, Notes by Owen Connellan, Esq., p. 294.
 † Cormac, son of Art, son of “Conn of the Hundred Battles.”

"Cormac, son of Art, son of Conn," who was a monarch of great magnificence, as well as valour, displayed on state occasions, at his feasts, a hundred and fifty goblets of massive gold.

"Cormac's palace was situated on the hill of Tara, and a great part of the circular earthen ramparts, together with a large mound, in the centre, still remain. The palace is considered to have been built chiefly of wood, from the oak-forests, in ancient time, so abundant in Ireland; and was, probably, in part, formed of stone-work, or a fortress of cyclopean architecture, composed of great stones without cement; and though few of those stones now remain, they may have been removed in the course of ages, and placed in other buildings, particularly as the hill of Tara was easily accessible; and though this royal residence could not be compared with the more elegant stone buildings of more modern times, yet it was distinguished for all the rude magnificence peculiar to those early ages."*

Tara, like Babylon, Tyre, and other famous cities, is supposed to have decayed beneath the withering malediction of heaven. The curse of the church fell fiercely upon it. The circumstances were as follows:—A criminal fled for sanctuary to the altar of the abbey of Lothra. The culprit was the abbot's (St. Ruadhan's) brother. He was pursued by the monarch Dermot or Diarmaid (not our hero) whom he had offended; dragged from the horns of the altar, carried to Tara, and executed. The abbot revenged his brother's blood, and the indignity done his order, by fulminating a fierce malediction against the king and his house:—

"From the reign of the brown-haired Dermot,
Son of Fergus, son of Carroll;
From the judgment of Ruadhan on his house
There was no king at Temor."†

* Four Masters, Owen Connellan, Esq., p. 293.

† "Though several of the kings were afterwards styled 'Kings of Tara,' they did not reside there, but took their title from it, as the ancient residence of the monarchs."—Four Masters, O. Connellan's Notes, p. 296.

In order, more fully, to commemorate the effects of the curse, the abbot and his monks built a monastery near the deserted palace, and called it "*The Monastery of the Curse of Tara*," or "*Dermod*."

At the period of which my story treats, this monastery, as well as the palace of the kings, was in ruins.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CAVE OF THE CURSE.

About four miles (as the bird flies) from the hill of Tara, stood the palace of Melaghlin, King of East Meath, and brother to our heroine, Dearforgil.

The palace, which was in the midst of a dense forest, was strongly built, and surrounded by a deep moat, and a high earthen embankment, of difficult ascent.

The great gate lay open to allow of a hunting party to pass out. In the van of the wild and gay cavalcade, rode Melaghlin, a man of great personal beauty, though somewhat inclined to corpulence, for the king was a gourmand, and indisposed to exertion.

"But to oblige you, *mo coleen deigdealbda*," said Diarmaid, I should not go out to-day," said Melaghlin, looking first affectionately, at his sister, whom he loved; politely, at the king of Leinster, whom he wished to oblige, and cunningly at the sky, which he was in the habit of consulting on such occasions.

"I know that, Mel," replied Dearforgil, using a pet appellation; "but notwithstanding your disinclination, I am happy to see you on horseback, for, verily, brother, you are growing fat."

* "My comely-faced girl."

"Fat," replied Melaghlin, with a hearty laugh. Not fat, but *mellow*," with a play upon the word, "I'm growing ripe, sister mine. Let me see, how old am I now? Next Michaelmas I shall be thirty-five."*

"You are fat enough for fifty, Mel. If I had my will, you should hunt the buck before you ate the venison."

"Your penance would produce a fearful contention between my stomach and limbs, Dearforgil, for the one is naturally active and the other sluggish. These dogs go at a terrible pace," puffing, and wiping his brow.

"Terrible," said Diarmaid, with a smile:—"I fear, if we do not improve our speed, we shall be left behind."

"There, I knew it was coming," ejaculated the king of Meath, as a dash of rain struck his face. "I do not like the appearance of that rolling cloud, Dearforgil: I should recommend you to return."

"Return! Nay brother, we had best proceed."

"And at an improved pace," replied the king of Leinster, leading the way, whose lead was followed by the princess, leaving her brother behind, whose horse was as fat and puffy as its rider. The brother made a feeble effort to regain his lost ground; but feeling his, or his horse's inability to sustain it, drew bridle, and rode back at his leisure, to the palace.

Before the lapse of half an hour from the brother's departure, the whole face of heaven was veiled with clouds of a heavy leaden hue, which rolled in masses above the heads of our hero and heroine; now folding, and anon unfolding themselves, like mighty scrolls of parchment, or the book of doom, their margins illuminated with red and blue lightning.

"I am sorry we did not follow your brother's example," said

* "The Four Masters, speaking of Melaghlin's death, say, "This man was like swine fattening by hot fruit, like a branch cut down before the blossoming." A.D. 1155.

Diarmaid, addressing his companion, laying his hand on the bridle of her steed ; " the rain is falling in heavy drops."

He had barely uttered the words, before the forest, which the instant before had been dark and dense, was suddenly lighted up, as by the rays of a meridian sun ; and the instant after the whole artillery of heaven opened upon them. They fled for shelter to a ruined abbey on the hill of Tara—like culprits fleeing to the sanctuary of the altar ; and as they sped, the forest seemed to burn beneath their horses' feet ; while the forked lightning played through the branches of the trees, and around their heads like the flaming swords of cherubim. They found shelter in the mouth of a cave, beneath the ruined abbey.

No spot could look more drear or desolate than where they stood. *Ichabod*, " the glory is departed," was written on the brow of Tara. The old abbey—amidst the ruins of which they sought shelter—had been destroyed by lightning, which struck the priest before the altar. Before the mouth of the cave, or vault, beneath the sacred edifice, stood a blasted oak.

" You look pale, Dearforgil," said Diarmaid, taking her hand, and chaffing it in his : your hand is cold. Allow me to wrap this cloak around you"—drawing her towards him.

" Hark !" exclaimed Dearforgil, starting from his side.

" What did you hear ?" whispered Diarmaid.

" I wish we were out of this."

" Why so ? Know you this place ?"

" Yes."

" What is it called ?"

" The Abbey of the Curse of Diarmaid."

" *The Abbey of the Curse of Diarmaid !*" exclaimed the king, in surprise. By whom was it so called ?"

Before Dearforgil could reply, they were both startled by a

kind of fiendish, or hysterick laugh, which was, the next instant, strangled in the throat from which it sought egress.

"Fear not," said Diarmaid, entering the cave with his drawn sword in his hand. The princess followed close upon his heels. They stood among the sepulchres of the kings of Tara.

"You are welcome to the Curse of Diarmaid," said a hollow voice, which issued from a muffled female, in a dark corner of the cave; "you are welcome to the House of Death. Some* of your noble ancestors, Dearforgil," continued she, addressing the princess, with malignant emphasis, "lie here. Have you come to choose where *you* will lie. There is room for you both here."

"Who are you, woman?" inquired the king, who seemed more impressed than his companion, with the words, manner, and tones of this mysterious dweller among the tombs.

"Who am I?" replied she, with pride, drawing herself up.

"Yes, who are you?"

"*A virtuous woman*," replied she, scowling at the Princess of Brefney, with an expression of fierce and concentrated malice.

Her words and manner caused Dearforgil's face to glow with crimson shame.

"*Virtuous!*" said Diarmaid, with a sneer, coming to the rescue of his fair companion: it would be difficult to decide that, without seeing your face."

"Then look," said she, pushing back the hood, in fierce rage, approaching the lamp. She halted half way, hesitated, and soliloquised, "No, not yet: revenge is now dearer to me than vanity."

"I fear," replied the king, addressing the princess, "she is bereft of reason. What is your business here among the tombs?"

* We say *some*, for Clonmacnoise, called the Church of the Kings, was the usual place of sepulchre of the O'Melaghlinns. Doctor Petrie (in a letter to the writer) says, that, "here [Clonmacnoise] their present descendants still bury."

The strange being whom he addressed, relapsed into an abstracted state, and left his question unanswered. By and bye she looked up, and inquired, "What would ye? Whom seek ye?"

"Why should the living seek a dwelling among the dead?" replied the king, in the same strain."

"Where else can they find truth?"

"*Truth!*"

"Yes, *truth* and *faithfulness*."

"Let us depart," said Dearforgil, in Diarmaid's ear.

"The lady loves not this abode, although surrounded by her own kith and kin."

"Who are you, woman?" inquired the princess.

"No friend of thine, Dearforgil."

"She knows my name, as well as thine," whispered the princess. "Who can she be?"

"I know not: the sound of her voice is familiar to my ear; but her face is so muffled, that I cannot see a feature distinctly. Let us go"—leading his companion through the aperture by which they had entered.

They passed from the cave among the ruins of the Palace of Tara—for the storm had now abated,—and approached a Druidical altar of upright pillars. In doing so they had to cross a large stone of curious appearance, which lay in their path. Diarmaid mounted first, and when in the act of assisting his companion to rise, the stone, which hung on a kind of pivot, went round, and in doing so emitted a melancholy sound. The next instant it fell from the position it had occupied for centuries.

"Hark to the *ges*," said the princess: "'Tis the *Lia Fail*! O! God, it has fallen! O! Diarmaid, I fear this omen forebodes some coming evil."

“The *Lia Fail*!* What have we here?”—looking down.

On the face of the stone which was up, when it hung in its position, were inscribed these words, in the Irish characters :—

“Cineadh Scuit, saor an fhine,
Mun budh breag an fhaisdine,
Mar a flughid an Liagh Fail
Dlighid flaitheas do ghabhail.”

which may be thus translated into English—

“If Fate’s decrees be not announced in vain,
Where’er this stone is found the Scots shall reign.”*

When the Stone of Destiny fell to the ground, in the way described, it turned over, revealing the following remarkable sentence, in Ogham characters, of which we offer the following translation :—

When Brefney’s bride to Leinster goes,
Erin will flee to arms of foes,
And perish there in bloody throes.

* The *Lia Fail*, or “Stone of Destiny.” This memorable stone, upon which the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned, is supposed, by some, to be the same as that Jacob used for a pillow at Bethel. It is a prevalent opinion that it was removed from Ireland, and deposited in Scone, in Scotland, (where it was used at coronations) and carried thence by Edward I. to England, and placed beneath the coronation chair, in Westminster Abbey. In fact, that it was upon this Irish stone Queen Victoria (long may she live) was crowned. But Doctor Petrie—and his dictum is not without authority,—asserts that the Stone of Destiny is still at Tara. Hurrah! This is news for Repealers. This precious stone was in the habit of emitting a musical sound, called *ges*, when the coronation performed upon it was of a *deo volente* and *jure divino* character, but having been removed to Connaught, it there lost its *ges*, or charm. It emitted its last dying groan, on the occasion referred to in the text.

* By the Scots we are to understand the Irish. Ireland was anciently called *Scotia Major*, and Scotland, which was principally colonised from Ireland, *Scotia Minor*. Hector Boetius renders the Irish into Latin thus :—

“Ni fallat fatum, Scotti, quounque locatum,
Invenient lapidem hunc, regnare tenentur ibidem.”

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PROPHECY.

Diarmaid and Dearforgil were silent and abstracted as they rode from the ruined palace of Tara. They were musing on the fearful import of the prophecy—for prophecy it appeared. Dearforgil had fled from Brefney, in company with the man whom she loved, (and to whom she had given her troth *before* her marriage with O'Rourke) to the palace of her brother; and up to the present moment, had not dared to indulge the thought of uniting herself to him by other ties than those of love and gratitude.

As she rode silently by the side of the noble-looking prince, who had adventured life and kingdom to accomplish her freedom, she mused over, and then repeated the first line of the mysterious prophecy, inscribed on the Stone of Destiny—laying strong emphasis on the word *Bride* :—

“When Brefney’s bride to Leinster goes.”

Bride! Yes, but not *wife*. When Brefney’s bride to *Leinster goes!* What can be the import of these strange words? When think you of returning to Leinster?” said she, raising her face, which was flushed from the strange character of her thoughts.

The king looked up from his reverie, and replied, “To *Leinster!* I have not decided; but, I suppose, soon.”

“Soon!” said the princess, in sad surprise.

“Yes,” replied Diarmaid, moodily.

Dearforgil sighed deeply, and relapsed into silence.

“I had not known sin, but by the law,” says the great apostle of the Gentiles, when striving against the law of his members,

with a power and an agony of soul, which caused, even *him*, to exclaim, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.”

A heavy penalty on crime, like a high price on marketable commodities, has the effect of enhancing the value of the article. There was but one forbidden tree in Paradise, and of its fruit, it was predicted, “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” But notwithstanding this fearful prophecy, Eve lent her ear to the tempter: “She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.”

“How far is the Palace of Ferns from Tara?” inquired Dearforgil—looking up again in the king’s face.

“Eighty miles.”

Dearforgil sighed deeply. “I shall be very lonely after you are gone. What if O’Rourke should come, and carry me hence in your absence.”

Diarmaid started, with a fearful scowl upon his brow. “Never, never, so help me Heaven, shall Tiernan O’Rourke carry you hence, except across my corpse.”

“But when you are away how can you protect me; and my brother, though kind and well-disposed, has neither the courage nor ability.”

“True, true. Would that you could —— But why should I ask ——.”

“That I could what, Diarmaid?”

“Nothing,” replied he, relapsing into a silent and dark mood, during which he muttered to himself the mysterious lines:—

“When Brefney’s bride to Leinster goes,
Erin will flee to arms of foes,
And perish there in bloody throes.”

What can be the import of this dark prophecy?"

There is a fascination about what is mysterious, as well as about what is forbidden; and if we have the key of the dark chamber in our own keeping, we will use it as did Bluebeard's wife, though our blood pay the penalty of our curiosity. "Dear-forgil," said the king, with solemnity, laying his hand upon her bridle arm, arresting her progress.

She looked up in his face.

"This is no time for indecision, or deception. Those who have ventured above the knees, should cross the stream without halting. Let your lips speak as your heart dictates, without fear. Will you come with me to Ferns, or stay behind, and incur the danger you predict?"

While Dearforgil hung her head and hesitated to reply, the elements, which had, a second time, collected their whole park of artillery above their heads, exploded in a sheet of flame, which scorched their very faces, and a roll of thunder that shook the earth beneath their horses' feet.

"O God! I'm blinded!" exclaimed the princess, raising her hand to her eyes.

"Are you?" cried the king, trembling from head to foot.
"Can you see, Dearforgil? Speak."

"Thank God! yes."

"Then follow me, for the storm is not yet past."

They rode home in silence, and alighted in safety, though drenched to the skin, at the gate of Melaghlin's palace.

"Welcome, sister mine; welcome, Diarmaid. But speed, and change your apparel, for supper waits, and the ride, to-day, has vastly improved my appetite; and the haunch is fat, and fit for the son of an Irish king. Ha! ha! ha!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN OLD FRIEND UNDER A NEW NAME.

Diarmaid and Dearforgil had not left the cave many minutes, before our friend, Father Peter, entered it, and it must be confessed, with more of the bearing of an Irish chief, than of a swine-herd, or even priest. We, therefore, feel disposed to Nedha's opinion, that "Father Peter was not what he seemed."

"What! *Killpatrick!* you here, exclaimed the strange woman, doffing her hood, and revealing a pale, and proud, and withal, a beautiful face; on the brow of which the perspiration stood in clear crystal globules, from over mental excitement.

"You have seen them, then," said Killpatrick, alias Father Peter, who marked her agitation with deep interest.

"I have! What brought them here? But I do not regret it"—wiping her brow. "It strengthens my purpose, and sharpens my revenge, to see that face."

"And a fair face it is," said Killpatrick, with a smile.

"Killpatrick, I cannot understand you. Do you smile at the courtezan, who comes to take my place, by the side of Diarmaid, on the throne of Leinster?"

"There, Una, you will never be: and it was not to place you at *Diarmaid's* side, that I laboured and jeopardised life, for the last six years."

"What would you?"

"The fulfilment of your promise, given me on the night——"

"*Oh that fearful night!*"* raising her hand to her eyes—while a tremor shook her frame.

* Vide chapter I. "*The Queen's Bower.*"

"Fearful, or not; I then and there accomplished your purpose, and fulfilled *my* part of the contract, and now demand my reward."

"What! at the sacrifice of the throne of Leinster?"

"That is already sacrificed."

"Why, think you, he will dare marry this vile——"

"I know not; but he will dare whatever he desires."

"He had never succeeded in carrying her from Lough Ree, had you given timely notice to O'Rourke, or Turlough O'Conor."

"I told you before, Una, I have my own reasons for withholding my confidence from the prince of Brefney, and the king of Connaught."

"And from me, also, it would seem. It was the suspicion of this, after overhearing Diarmaid's conversation with the abbot, which caused me to follow you both from Cill-dara to this. At that time, I suspected you of acting treacherously."

"Acting treacherously to you?"

"Yes, to *me*: according to your own account, you deceived the prince of Brefney himself."

"How was that, Una?"

"He mistook you for Diarmaid, whom he now supposes dead; and that girl, Nedha, you brought with you, for his own wife; and you allowed him to lie under this mistake; and left the island, without giving an explanation; and to the present day, he knows neither of Diarmaid's existence, nor his wife's residence."

"From whom did you learn these particulars?" inquired Killpatrick, greatly chagrined.

"From Nedha, the Princess of Brefney's maid."

"D—— her, chatterbox," said Killpatrick, between his teeth.

"Had it been your *object*, to forward their escape, you could not have acted more cunningly."

Father Peter winced beneath the searching glance that accompanied these words; but instantly recovering his presence of mind, "Una," said he, with sincerity, "if you suspect me of entertaining a single kind feeling for Diarmaid, you do me wrong. But put me to the proof."

"Of that, I never suspected you. But if you hope, by entangling him with this vile woman, to induce me to comply with your wishes——"

Again, he winced, for her words pierced the marrow of his purpose; but summoning courage for the occasion, he exclaimed, with an energy bordering on pathos, "Una, *hear* me: there is but one way to revenge yourself: speak, and I will do it."

"Speak you; what is it?"

"The death of Diarmaid."

Una looked up in his face, and the glance of her eye was as cold as a moon-beam. But, surprising, there was a tear there It stood on her cheek like dew, or rain on a brazen statue of Minerva.

"Had'st thou said, the death of Dearforgil, I could have loved thee for it"—waving him off in proud disdain.

"She loves him still," mused Father Peter, leaving the cave. "Women are like dogs; the more you kick them, and drive them back, the closer they follow you. I must bethink me of some other means. Were I to kill him, she would wed his grave: such is the perversity of her nature. Were he to kill me, she would lay her down in mine. To stab her through another's bosom, would wound her deeper than to stab her own. I know her well. She once loved me, and does so still; but *here'*—smiling, and laying his hand on his heart—"we will not stab.—Her brother!"—musing deeply—and how like she looked, when robed in priest's attire—the same pale face. I have it"—starting in wild delight—"and strike two blows in one—he

marred my marriage—and gave his sister to Diarmaid. From Diarmaid he shall get his reward. Where is my horse?"

The horse was standing near him. He sprang to its back, and rushed with the speed of the whirlwind from Tara to the palace of Melaghlin, the woods all the way ringing with "Ha ha's!" chuckles, and peals of laughter.

He was met by Nedha at the palace gate, who chided him for the long delay.

"Thou would'st not blame me, Nedha, had'st thou known the cause."

"What was it, Father Peter."

"Remember you the cowled priest, who sought your lady's life?"

"Hast thou learned who he is?"

"Thou wilt not tell thy mistress, or Diarmaid?"

"No; speak!"

"Niall O'Moore."

"Who is he?"

"The Lord of Leix; the brother of the late queen. He has just returned from abroad."

"Is he a priest?"

"Yes."

"He heard, no doubt, of the queen, his sister's, murder. Holy Saint Bridget! what a tragedy! Was it Diarmaid murdered her?"

"I know not; but, I believe ——."

"Then why should he stab my mistress. It is like him, the hypocritical knave."

"Very true; but, Nedha, not a word to your mistress."

"Not a word," said Nedha, hastening to Dearforgil's apartments with the news.

That night the king sought Father Peter, but he could not

be found. He next made inquiries, of Melaghlin, for O'Moore; but Melaghlin could give him no information. "The cowardly assassin," said the king, "why not strike at me. I thought I knew his voice. This explains all. He could not raise his hood. His eyes were weak. The first day he crosses my path, will be the last he shall see the sun."

"What! you would not blind him?" whispered a soft voice in his ear.

"Blind who?" said Diarmuid, with a start.

"Niall O'Moore," said Dearforgil, who heard his soliloquy.

"No matter now. You shall hear some other time. Go now—kissing her—and prepare for your journey. We depart in an hour. Fear not: I have promised you to spare his life; but ask no more."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PALACE OF FERNS.

The kings of Leinster had royal residences at Dinnrigh, on the river Barrow, between Carlow and Leighlen; at Naas, in Kildare; at Old Ross, in Wexford; at Ballymoon, in Carlow; and at Ferna, or Ferns,* the capital of the kingdom.

The palace of Ferns, at the time of our story, was surrounded by a dark wood.

* The present ruined castle of Ferns, now the property of Richard Donovan of Ballymore, Esq., who has fitted up a small chapel in one of its towers, is supposed, by some, to have been erected by Dermot MacMurrough; but the Editor of the *Four Masters*, Dr. O'Donovan, after a careful examination of the ruins, has come to the conclusion "that no part of the present works is as old as Dermot's time."—*Four Masters*, A.D. 1166, note.

"Eva," said Dearforgil, addressing a child, whose

" angel face
Made sunshine in that shady place."

"Eva, do you love to dwell alone, in these woods?"

"Yes," replied the child.

"Why do you love it? Do you not feel lonely?"

"No."

"Never?"

"No."

"How is that?"

"Because—because"—looking up shyly.

"Well?"

"Because I'm thinking."

"Thinking!" exclaimed the princess, looking at her as she might be supposed to look at the Queen of the Fairies—"How old are you?"

"Nine."

"And would you sooner think than talk?"

"Sometimes."

"What do you think about?"

Eva smiled.

"Well?"

"Of many things."

"And what do you think of oftenest?"

"My father."

"Come and kiss me. Do you ever think of me?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of me?"

Eva looked perplexed, which the princess observing, said,

"Speak Eva, and fear not: what do you think of me?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know how to explain it, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Do you love me?"

"I do."

"Why?"

"Because my father loves you."

"How know you that?"—blushing.

Another smile.

"Did he ever tell you so?"

"No."

"Then how do you know—how can you tell?"

"I don't know. By his face."

"You read faces? Why, child, you are a fairy. I must wear a veil to guard my thoughts from those bright orbs of thine. What's that you see now?" Eva was looking earnestly out of the window.

"A man."

"Where?"

"Behind the clump of trees near the old Tower. See, he puts out his head. He sees us looking at him."

"Where, where?"

"There. He's gone now."

"What was he like?" inquired Dearforgil, anxiously.

"He was very ugly."

"Tall or short?"

"Very tall."

"What coloured hair?"

"Red, and his face is all scarred."

"*Red*," reiterated Dearforgil, laying her hand on her heart to still its palpitations, while she kept her eyes rivetted upon the clump of trees behind which the stranger had retired. "Could it be O'Rourke? If so, he has heard of my destination, and comes

to claim me. Would to God I were dead! Shall I inform Diarmaid of my suspicions?"

"See! see! there goes my brother," exclaimed Eva, with animation. "He sees the man."

"Where?" inquired Dearforgil. "*Hears* him, you mean: the poor blind boy—but who would believe it, to see him walking straight up to that clump of trees. God grant the man may not injure him."

"Shall I call him back?"

"Yes—no—do, do, call him back."

"Enna," cried Eva, from the casement.

The blind boy turned round his head for a moment, and then hurried towards the trees.

"God guard the child from evil! But see, the king, your father, and his brehon, approach: let us retire"—taking Eva by the hand, leaving the room.

Diarmaid's face beamed with pleasure as they passed him in the portal.

CHAPTER XXV.

BLIND ENNA.

"Mark how that boy guides his course through the forest," said Diarmaid, addressing O'Davarán, his brehon, or judge. "See, he stops. There is something behind these trees. His sense of hearing is wonderful."

The lad, or young man, who was stone-blind, but of a very noble appearance, stood in the attitude of one about to discharge his arrow, the bow-string drawn to his ear, the shaft point-

ing, now to the right, and anon to the left of a large oak, about thirty yards from where he stood. After a time the bow-string relaxed, and Enna—still holding the quiver in the groove, between finger and thumb—approached the tree. In doing so, he had to make a circuit round some brush-wood. When he approached the oak, which he did with the stealthy tread of a cat, the quarry had flown. His quick ear, catching the retiring footsteps, he dashed into the wood in pursuit.

“Whatever it was he heard, it has escaped him,” said the father, who was watching his blind child from the window. “I marvel, O’Davarán, how he makes his way through the forest. He can tell me the part of the heavens better than I can. The night I lost my way in passing through Fidh-dorcha, where we lay in wait to intercept O’Conor,* with the hostages of Leinster, that boy directed us safely, for the night was pitch dark.”

“The blind are seldom at fault in a wood,” replied the brehon: “trees are to blind men, what stars are to mariners:

Quin etiam cæli regionem in cortice signant.

He knows the points of the heavens by feeling the bark. Day and night are both alike to him. On such an occasion he has an advantage over those who have their eye-sight. He is never overtaken by fall of night.”†

“Poor boy! I sometimes rejoice his mother did not live to see him thus. There is a mystery both about her death, and this child’s sudden blindness, which I cannot fathom.”

O’Davarán, the brehon, looked up in the king’s face with curiosity.

* “Ruardhri Roderick O’Conor, then proceeded, accompanied by some forces, back to Leinster, and took their hostages, and he afterwards advanced to Fidh-dorcha, and took hostages of Diarmaid MacMurchadha, or MacMurrogh.”—See *Four Masters A.D. 1166*, p. 1161.

† Query? Is this the reason why we call night-fall, “*blindmen’s holidays*.”

"Have you suspicions, Shaun?" inquired the king of his judge, with affectionate confidence. It was only on such occasions he called him *Shaun*, or "John."

O'Davaran fixed his dark eye on the king and gave a "hem!" He was a wise judge, and knew the danger of interfering between man and wife, and more especially when they were king and queen. He therefore hemmed; the import of which Diarmaid seemed to understand, and therefore proceeded—

"My poor leman was a lovely woman, Shaun."

Shaun, who was a staid and sober man, near sixty years of age, gave a grunt, and a growl, at the name of leman—though the habit of keeping such was esteemed a royal privilege.

"I'm sure the queen was jealous of her, Shaun; more especially after the birth of that boy; for she feared barrenness herself. She first asked me to send her, and the child away, and quoted the example of Abraham and Hagar; and when I refused, threatened it would be worse for them both. Shaun, do you think she poisoned her?"

O'Davaran looked out from under his shaggy eye-brows, but did not permit his tongue to break cover.

"Speak, man, if you love me."

The brehon started, and said "Do you ask me if the *queen* poisoned her?"

"Yes, yes man; the *queen*. Who else?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know; but do you think she *was* poisoned?"

"I do."

"How do you know?"

"By her colour."

"Ah! I remember. She turned blue."

"Yes."

"It was the queen's conduct to the mother, which induced me

to nominate that boy Enna, the *Roydamna** of the kingdom. And at that time, *you know*, the boys eyes were as good as mine."

"True," said the brehon, shaking off his apparent apathy, and divesting himself of some of his cautiousness, for he was interested in the subject.

"Did the suspicion ever cross your mind, O'Davaran, that the death of the mother, and the blinding of the child,† might have proceeded from the same hand, in order to keep him from the throne,‡ and place her own son there. Did you ever suspect this?"

"Often" said the brehon, quite thrown off his guard; "and the impression can never be removed from my mind."

"Often!" exclaimed the king, in passion: then why not mention it before?"

"Because you never asked me."—"See what it is to meddle between man and wife," thought O'Davaran.

"Never asked you; you should have told me, without asking."

"I had nothing to tell. It was only a suspicion."

"True," replied the king, cooling down, "it is only a suspicion; and there are reasons against, as well as for it. It is true the child went to bed, that night, with perfect sight, and awoke, the next morning, stone blind; but then, if violence had been attempted, he would have mentioned it. We cannot be blinded without feeling it."

"I do not know that," replied O'Davaran. "The nerves or organs of feeling, lie on the surface of the skin, on the outer

* "Rioghdamna, or Roydamna, was the designation of an heir apparent or presumptive to any of the five provincial kingdoms."—Geraghty's edition of 'the Four Masters, annotated by Owen Connellan, Esq., p. 552, note.

† "Enna MacMurchedha, royal heir of Leinster, was blinded." He was (we are told by Dr. O'Donovan) the son of Diarmuid, king of Leinster, and the ancestor of the family of Kinsellagh.

‡ Cormac held his court at Tara till his eyes were destroyed, for it was not lawful that a king, with a personal blemish, should reside at Tara.—See History of the Cemeteries, Dr. Petrie's Round Towers, p. 100.

covering of the eye; this might be pierced, in sleep, by a fine needle; and having penetrated the outer covering, the needle might be forced to the centre of the ball, without even waking the child.”*

“Say you so. See, that boy returns again. Mark how he halts; he has surely hurt himself. Let us go forth to meet him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ENNA MEETS A TARTAR.

Enna, of whom we lost sight, as he dashed into the wood—bow and arrow in hand—came to a halt, about thirty yards of the clump of trees behind which his quarry lay concealed.

By and bye a man’s head appeared above the brush-wood.

“Keep in,” said his companion, “and let him approach. That bow and arrow gives him an advantage over us, at this distance.”

They lay perfectly still for ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, when Killpatrick looked out again—for he was one of them. He saw Enna standing like the statue of Apollo, with his bow drawn. Their eyes met. Killpatrick quailed before those dark eye-balls. After a time he started in joyful surprise. “By the Holy Virgin, it’s Enna, Diarmaid’s blind son. I’ll settle him. Do you stay here,” addressing his comrade, and make a noise, for the boy’s ear is as quick as a hound’s nose.”

* “The hostages of Connaught were blinded by the English, at Athlone.” “This would appear to have been done,” says the learned Editor of the *Four Masters*, Dr. O’Donovan, “not by putting out the eyes, but by thrusting needles into them.”—*Four Masters A.D. 1251.* p. 340. In a tragic tale by Eugène Sue—the “*Mysteries of Paris*,”—the principal hero of the story, blinds a man, without inflicting—it would seem—the slightest pain.

Saying which, he issued from cover, like a tiger from a jungle, making a half circuit from the clump where he had stood, to the place where Enna stood. When within a few yards of his victim, he drew his skein, made a dash forward, and cut the lad deeply in the joint of the leg, which protruded behind.

Enna gave a fierce and wild scream, and hobbled, or hopped back to the palace.

"I am sorry you maimed that blind boy," said Tiernan O'Rourke, the prince of Brefney, addressing his companion, who approached with a malicious grin.

"Sorry," said Killpatrick, looking with a fascinating eye at the bright blade, still smoking with the hot blood.

"Yes, sorry."

"Sorry," reiterated Killpatrick, looking up into the face of his fierce and blood-thirsty companion, with incredulity. "I never suspected you of being so chicken-hearted," wiping the knife on his hand, "but I merely houghed him. A blind man requires a cripple to guide him. It was thoughtful in me to provide him one."

"You mistake," said O'Rourke—not wishing to lie under the obloquy of feeling compassion for any living thing—"the reason I regret it is, that it may derange our plans. I had rather you had knocked him on the head with the battle-axe. I thought you intended to kill him. He will now give the alarm, and Diarmaid will send out scouts. We had better move to a distance from the palace.

Killpatrick, who was a sort of epicure in cruelty, and who found greater pleasure in tormenting his victims, or killing them piecemeal, than in the more manly sport of knocking them on the head, and who hoped for a future opportunity of gratifying his taste for blood on Enna—showed his fangs as he replied, "I'd think as little as yourself of braining that blind bastard,

but I had my reason for only maiming him. Diarmaid will now not only send out scouts, but follow in pursuit himself."

"What! It was your object, not only to set the pack of hounds, but the huntsman after us."

"Just so."

"You are mad."

"Not so. How can you otherwise expect to carry the princess from Ferns. Yes, we must have the whole pack, and the huntsman at their head, in pursuit; and what is more, make a proper trail, and make it long enough."

"And where shall we go?" inquired O'Rourke, who began to comprehend his friend's ruse.

"I have thought of that: it will not be far from this; but we have no time to lose"—leading the way.

"Hold there! where are you going? Do you think I desire to meet Diarmaid?"

"O no," said Killpatrick, with a sarcastic smile, "I never suspected you of that."

"What mean you? That I fear him?"

"He is reckoned a brave man."

"He! I hold him for a deer-hearted poltron."

"What! Diarmaid!"

"Did I not follow him from Leitrim to Meath, where I thought I slew him; but it would seem he bobbed his head, to escape the blow of the battle-axe.

I would not blame him for that, said Killpatrick, *alias* Father Peter, whose heroic conduct O'Rourke so minutely described.

"Nor perhaps blame him, for lying down, uninjured, beneath the body of his dead horse?"

Twas cunning."

"Cunning! Was ever Irish king guilty of anything more unkingly?"

"You would have no objection to meet him, then," said Killpatrick, who was nettled at these remarks.

"Not now, of course."

"I thought so. Then you had better follow me with speed, or perhaps —"

"Perhaps what?"

"Nothing."—"The big booby," to himself.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BLOODY BOWER.

It was the third day from the departure of Diarmaid, who had gone in pursuit of the party that had maimed Enna, when Dearforgil issued from the palace, accompanied by her faithful, but inquisitive and enterprising maid, Nedha.

"I have no desire whatever to see the place, Nedha. Indeed, from what you tell me—which I can scarcely believe—I should fear to put my foot within the 'Queen's Bower'—as you call it."

"The *Bloody Bower*, they call it now," replied Nedha, who thought the latter appellation far more fascinating. "If I were in your place"—continued Nedha, who used great freedom of speech—"I should not sleep easy, without seeing it; and now, especially, as the king is away, no one will be the wiser. The servants say, it was once very beautiful."

"How far is it?" enquired Dearforgil, who was not as indifferent to the enterprise as her words seemed to imply.

"About a mile. See, there it is, among that grove of trees"—pointing to the place. "What a dark, melancholy, sweet, charming looking place it is. I wonder is it haunted?"

Dearforgil, as well as Blue-beard's wife, had something of woman's curiosity, and allowed herself to be persuaded, and drawn on, step by step, to the fatal bower. The branches of the trees were so numerous, the flowering shrubs so much entangled, and the briars, nettles, and dog-grass, so thick and matted, that they found it difficult to penetrate to the deserted mansion. But Nedha, after scratching both her hands and face, pushed boldly through, followed by the princess.

"O gemini! but this was beautiful once," exclaimed the maid, as the *coup d'œil* of the principal apartment, opened on her. Its fit for a fairy. Its a grand thing to be a queen."

"But they say," replied the princess, "she was unhappy."

"Unhappy!" exclaimed Nedha—who thought nothing of that—"They say he murdered her."

"He! who?"

"The king."

"Nedha, never dare utter those words again: who did you hear say so?"

"Every one"—with confidence.—"They say her blood is on the chamber floor."

"I don't believe it. The king of Leinster could murder no one."

"Well, we can see; seeing is believing. This must be her chamber"—pushing open the door. "List! I thought I heard some one. O gemini! there is the blood!"

The mistress turned her eyes to the spot, and there, sure enough, was a dark red mark, like the stain of Rizzio's blood, on the floor of the queen's chamber, in Holyrood. As Dearforgil's eyes rested on it, her face paled. Hearing a breathing and rustling behind her, she turned quickly round. She stood face to face with the prince of Brefney.

"At last!" said O'Rourke, moving over to close the door.

Nedha, whose quick eye marked the movement, sped through the opening, like a bird. O'Rourke seized her by the skirt. She escaped from him with the scream of a sea-gull—leaving part of its plumage in the hands of the fowler.

"That *dubhsaigh**—will destroy all. Come, madam"—turning to the princess, who stood as pale and rigid as a marble statue—"there is no time to lose; your horse is in waiting, below. But were I to deal with you, as you deserve, I should leave another mark upon that floor."

"O do!" exclaimed the princess: "kill me, and I will forgive you all. You could not do me a greater kindness. See here's my throat. I'll bless you, with my dying breath"—falling on her knees, and protruding her fair throat for his sword-blade.

"No," said O'Rourke—sneering maliciously—"that would not suit my purpose at present—come"—leading her out—"mount"—raising her to the saddle. The next instant he sprang to his own, and they both disappeared among the thick foliage of the forest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PURSUIT.—THORKIL WINS A GOLDEN COLLAR.

As Nedha, with wild screams—which rang through the forest—and dishevelled hair, neared the palace, the cavalcade which had gone in pursuit of Killpatrick and his companion, (at the head of which rode the king of Leinster) drew up.

"What ails the lass?" inquired Diarmaid.

Nedha—wringing her hands in wild despair—"My mistress! my mistress!"

* "Black ——"

“What of her, girl?” flinging himself from his horse.
Nedha:—“O’Rourke! O’Rourke!”—sobbing.
Diarmaid:—“What of O’Rourke? speak!”
Nedha:—“He has found her! he has found her!”
Diarmaid:—“Where?—speak!”
Nedha:—“In the Bloody Bower, in the Bloody Bower!”
Diarmaid:—“When?”
Nedha:—“Now, now. O! God, what will I do; O! Holy Virgin, what will I do. What will I do”—wringing her hands, and tearing her hair.

“Follow me,” cried the king to his followers, vaulting into his saddle, and dashing forward in the direction of the Bloody Bower, at a fearful pace.

Enna, the blind boy, to whom the Princess of Brefney had always been most kind, on learning the particulars of her capture, followed his father. Though his leg was badly wounded, it did not seem to interfere with hard riding.

O’Rourke, and the captured princess, had left the Bower fully an hour before the King of Leinster and his party gained it. Diarmaid ground his teeth in vengeance, for they did not leave, that he could observe, a track or trace, to direct pursuit—and the evening shades were drawing round them. Turning towards his party in despair, his eye fell on Enna, and his dog, Thorkil, in deep consultation, beneath a large tree. The father started with surprise and delight to see him there; and able, notwithstanding his wound, to ride; for he knew, that for a night-march through the forest, he could have no surer guides than Enna and Thorkil.

“Enna, my boy, I am delighted to see you able to ride. How is the leg? Better? Have you found their track?”

“Yes.”

“Thank God! Take the lead. I will keep beside you.”

After riding six hours, as fast as their horses could go, without drawing rein, Diarmaid asked whether he was sure they had taken the right road.

Enna drew up, called back Thorkil, caused him to stand on his hind legs, took him by the fore paws, brought his nose into close contact with his own, and commenced a palaver, in dumb show; with the result of which, both seemed perfectly satisfied.

"Well, Enna," inquired the king, who watched their proceedings with deep interest; "are we on their track?"

"We are? and they are not far before us."

"Thank God! Ride forward."

They had not ridden more than two miles, when Thorkil gave tongue.

"You have them Thorkil, have you?" said Enna.

Thorkil wagged his tail and moved on. After riding another mile, he halted, and looked perplexed, and seemed to be deciding between two courses, whether he should go to the right or left.

"Quick, man," said Enna, addressing him.

Thorkil dashed through a thicket, on his right, with the king at his tail. Within the thicket was an open space, in the centre of which sat a mounted horseman, as quiet as the equestrian statue in College Green. The moon—breaking clearly through a rack of clouds—revealed to Diarmaid's eyes the hated form and features of the Prince of Brefney.

A simultaneous exclamation of delight burst from the bosoms of both these mighty warriors. The next instant, they rushed upon each other like two thunder-clouds, from which burst the lightning flashes of their armour. The next, the Prince of Brefney lay unhorsed upon the plain, with Diarmaid's sword at his throat. "Where is she? Where is Dearforgil? speak, before you die!"

O'Rourke, who was badly, though not mortally wounded, grinned horribly, in reply.

"May it please you, Ard Righ," said one of the king's men rushing up, "the dog, and Prince Enna, are on a new scent."

"Where?" cried Diarmaid, his mind directed to even a more fascinating pursuit, than that of cutting O'Rourke's throat. "A golden collar for the man that finds the Princess of Brefney."

The reward put metal in their heels. They swept the forest with the speed and fury of contending whirlwinds.

As O'Rourke lay on his back, perfectly motionless, a horseman who could not be distinguished—at that hour—from one of Diarmaid's followers, cautiously approached, and whispered in his ear, "Tiernan O'Rourke, are you dead?"

O'Rourke started to his feet, and reeled, as he asked, "Is that you, Killpatrick?"

"Yes. Can you mount?"

"I'll try. Where's the princess?"

"Safe enough, where you left her; and where they'll never find her. Let me help you." He helped him to rise. "Where are you hurt?"

"In the head."

"Your head looks sound enough: come mount before they return. Did you find Diarmaid, the paltron, or coward you imagined?"—smiling.

"What about the princess: shall I leave her behind? inquired O'Rourke, without replying.

"Leave the princess to me."

"To *you!*" exclaimed O'Rourke, in surprise—whose head was still confused from the blow of Diarmaid's battle-axe.

"Yes, to take care of. Ride on: I shall bring her with me. Where shall we meet?"

"At Glendalough," said O'Rourke, riding forward.

The search for Dearforgil, and the contest for the golden collar, was long and intense. After searching, in vain, for two or three hours, Diarmaid, in despair, hastened back to the spot where he had left O'Rourke, resolving to hold him a prisoner, till the princess was restored. What was his amazement and chagrin to find that he had escaped.

The King of Leinster stamped, and tore his princely hair. He had lost the objects both of his love and revenge. "To horse!" he cried, addressing those around him.

At this instant the sweet sounds of Enna's horn saluted his ear.

"He has found the princess! My noble boy, has won the golden collar! Would I could leave him my kingdom. Is the princess found, Enna?" approaching him.

"Yes."

"Where? I do not see her."

"Here," said Enna.

"Where, Enna, I see her not."

"Put your ear to the tree," said the blind lad—taking his father's hand, and leading him to a large elm.

He did so, and replied, "I hear nothing, boy. Thou art deceived."

"Try again," said Enna, smiling.

Diarmaid applied his ear a second time, and caught a feeble sound, which it was difficult to distinguish from the wind moaning among the branches.

"The tree is hollow," remarked the boy; "they have hidden the princess in the cavity of the trunk."

The king sprang from his horse's back to one of the branches, from that to the main trunk, and found his son's assertion verified. There she lay, her hands bound firmly behind her back, and her face muffled.

After removing the bandages, unloosing the cords, and discovering that Dearforgil had received no personal injury, Diarmaid took the golden collar from his own neck, and said—addressing his son—“now, Enna, for thy reward.”

“Not so,” replied Enna, “the prize is not mine.”

“Whose, then? asked the king, in surprise.

“It belongs to Thorkil.”

“What! To the dog?”

“Yes.”

“Then, by Saint Patrick, the noble brute shall wear it”—placing the golden collar round Thorkil’s neck.

CHAPTER XXIX.

O’ROURKE AND HIS VALET DE CHAMBRE.

It was a long time before O’Rourke, whose head was large and strong, could get the sound produced by the blow of Diarmaid’s battle-axe out of his ears. It was longer before he regained sufficient strength to think of taking the field, to revenge the injury done his person and honour.

But he was not the man to forego his revenge. He nursed it in his sick bed; and there bethought him, how it could be best gratified. His strategy, for the recovery of the princess—to which he had been urged by Killpatrick—had failed. He was not able to contend with Diarmaid, King of Leinster, in open warfare, who could bring a far larger force into the field, than he.

“I will appeal to the King of Connaught. It is true that he united with Diarmaid and O’Neill in the dismemberment of

Brefney ; but he will not stand idle while so foul an injustice is done to a royal prince, who claims kindred with himself. Ho ! out there"—calling to his servants.

"Here, my Lord," replied his *valet de chambre*—shall we style him.

"Come, quick, and help me to dress. But stay, go first, and tell the captain of cavalry to prepare fifty horsemen, with provisions for two days. It will not do to prey upon O'Conor's people, as we seek their aid."

"Yes, my Lord."

"And tell them to put the saddle, with the silver mounting, on the piebald mare."

"And the chain bridle, my Lord?"

"Of course."

"Will your Lordship wear your golden collar?"

"Indubitably."

"And your new brogues."

"Without a doubt, for I go to Connaught, to visit my friend, O'Conor."

"Your *friend*, my Lord ? Is it, *visit*—do you say ?"

"Yes, is there any harm in that?"

"Eh-yeh ! no, my Lord ; but, as it is generally a *visitation* you pay the O'Conors, I thought—may be——"

"May be what?"

"Your Lordship was going to take a prey, for the O'Conors did your honor a mortal wrong, in giving Longford to O'Melaghlin, King of Meath. I wonder how your Lordship can forget that?"

"We must forgive and forget, Owen : go now, and see that everything is ready for my departure."

"As sure as life, the prince is hatching mischief. I never heard him to use these words, 'we must forgive and forget,' but

he had some devilment in store for somebody," soliloquised the servant, leaving the chamber. "If O'Conor lets him out of Connaught with his head on his shoulders, he is not the man I took him for."

CHAPTER XXX.

O'ROURKE VISITS O'CONOR.

O'Rourke and his Irish cavaliers, preceded by a herald, bearing a white flag, crossed the Shannon, near Longford, and advanced, without let or hindrance, to the royal residence of O'Conor, King of Connaught; who, suspecting the object of their mission, received them with all kingly hospitality. He felt flattered at being chosen as champion in such an affair as the rescue of a princess, who had been carried off—as O'Rourke asserted—against her will, and detained a prisoner in cruel bondage. He had also serious cause of umbrage against Diarmuid, who had, on more than one occasion, encouraged MacLoughlin O'Neill to assume the sovereignty of Ireland. He, therefore, with all promptitude, made arrangements with the Prince of Brefney, for invading Leinster; and having decided on the time and place for concentrating their forces, dismissed him with presents, and many professions of kindness and good will.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW DEARFORGIL LOVED O'ROURKE.

"And you tell me, Dearforgil, that the Prince of Brefney never pressed his hateful presence upon you, from the morning of your marriage to the day I carried you from Lough Ree."

"*Never*, Diarmaid: I would not deceive you for the world; but call it not marriage, for I was constrained, against my will, to the altar."

"For acting thus, I could forgive him much; for, had he chosen, he might have rendered your existence one of hateful thrall."

"Thank him not, for I swore at the altar, to have his life if he forced me; and I carried the instrument of my revenge in my bosom."

"What was that, Dearforgil?" asked the king, smiling, at what appeared to him a harmless threat.

"*This*," said the princess, drawing a small bright skein, with an ivory handle, from her bosom.

Diarmaid started with surprise, as he took it from her hand—
"What!" said he, "and would you have courage to use this?"

"I would have courage, and that vile wretch knew it, and never put me to the proof. He knew I wore this knife near my heart, for he saw it, as it dropped from my bosom in the garden; and the glitter of the steel had some power in disenchanted him of his base love, if he possessed any, which I doubt."

"If he never loved you, why seek your hand?"

"For my dowry, which was rich; but knowing the weakness of my poor kind brother, Melaghlin, he hoped, after my father's

death, to inherit Meath, and be acknowledged as its king. Was it not a conviction of these, his ambitious views and designs, that induced Turlough O'Conor, MacLoughlin O'Neill, and yourself, to drive him back to the mountain fastnesses and lakes of the North."

"Then there is no truth in the song composed by his ollav, describing your unfaithfulness, in fleeing with me, during his absence," said Diarmaid, with a smile.

"What song do you refer to?"

"Here it is," said the king, drawing a manuscript from his bosom, and reading the following lines, in Irish, which have been thus translated by a modern poet:—

"The island lay smiling before me,
Where lately I left her behind,
Yet I trembled, and something hung o'er me,
That saddened the joy of my mind.
I look'd for the lamp, which she told me,
Should shine when her pilgrim return'd,
But though darkness began to infold me,
No lamp from the battlements burned!"

"Who wrote these lines?" inquired the princess, with interest.

"An Irish ollav, named O'Moore."

"They are very beautiful, but very false."

"I feel it, my Dearforgil, said the king, pressing her to his bosom; and if this"—turning about the bright skein—"was the welcome you had for him, he had no occasion to repent your absence. You must give this to me, and depend on my sword, to preserve your person for the future; though I do not apprehend that O'Rourke will ever trouble the neighbourhood of Ferns again."

"The Holy Virgin grant it; but leave the weapon with me, Diarmaid, for I shall never plant it in any bosom, but his or

mine. See here comes Enna, and Thorkil, with his golden collar."

"Poor boy! what a noble fellow, Dearforgil. Well, Enna, how knew you we were here?"

"I heard you speaking, as I passed through yonder thicket. Do you expect strangers from Connaught?"

"Connaught!" no, why do you ask?"

"I heard the voice of Connaughtmen in the forest yonder."

"No!"

"Yes, I could not be mistaken: the dog heard them too."

"Did they see you?"

"No."

"Who do you think they are?"

"Scouts."

"You must be mistaken, Enna."

"He may be correct, Diarmaid, God has given a prescience, and mental vision to the young prince, beyond his fellows. You had better make further inquiry."

"Inquiry? what do you apprehend?"

"I know not, but the image of that hateful monster haunts me day and night."

"Fear not, he will not come a second time to seek you. He must have a skull like a bull, to bear the blow of my battle-axe. It would have broken in one of ordinary thickness, like an egg-shell. But let us return to the palace, and make inquiry, if strangers have been seen about the park." Inquiries were instituted, but no one had either seen or heard them.

"You were mistaken for once, Enna," said the king, smiling on the intelligent face of his sightless son.

"Enna shook his head, and bent down, and patted Thorkil, who was evidently of the same mind as the blind prince.

"Two against one, eh!" said Diarmaid, with good humour,

who understood the meaning of the pat. " Well, Enna, when you catch a Connaughtman prowling about the palace, you shall have a golden collar, as well as Thorkil."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CONNAUGHTMAN.

Connaught produces the very best specimens of the pure Celt, unadulterated by civilisation, with all the native cunning of the North American Indian, I was *going* to say, but let me rather say, the Irish peasant. In the city he looks foolish enough, and flounders about like a fish out of water—with his nose not only cocked, but actually curled, and his mouth lying as wide open as his own cabin door, affording those who have the curiosity, an opportunity of looking straight down his throat—although it is little they will discover there of the inner man. The open mouth gives a foolish, or *omadhauin* expression, but this is no more than "a blind," for he is as cunning as old Nick, as we may conclude from the twinkle of his grey eye, which he screws into the smallest imaginable focus—a habit adopted from infancy, to guard it from the sun; for when a child, he had no more hat than breeches,

The Connaught peasant may be an indifferent flag-hopper, but he is a first-rate bog-trotter. Here he is on firm ground. To understand the genius of a Connaught peasant, you must live in the country with him, lie down with him in the field, and chew the long grass, in silence, till you wind yourself into his confidence; and even then, it is but little you will get out of him.

But to our story. As pure a specimen of a Connaught peasant as ever crossed the Shannon, lay on his belly among the dog-grass of Ferns, peering through the embrasures of the castle with all that innocent and interesting curiosity for which they are so remakable. By and bye he crept, or crawled near the walls, and looked in again, and from his grunt of satisfaction, we conclude the review of the interior was all he could desire. But while in the act of turning round his head and heels, for flight, his ear came in contact with a cold substance. Thinking it was a frog, he put up his hand and took Thorkil by the nose; who resented the indignity by taking the Connaught man by the throat; who, in self-defence, drew his skein. How the affair might have terminated, between man and dog—had they been left to fight it out—we cannot say—for they were both masters of their own weapons—but before any actual injury was done, Enna came up, and took the Connaughtman a prisoner of war, and brought him to the king, his father, who finding it impossible to make him speak a single intelligent word, brought him to O'Davarán, his brehon, or judge.

There he stands in the presence of the king, the judge, and the servants of the palace, his mouth wide open, in amazement, as if he neither knew, or suspected, why, or wherefore he stood there.

"Who are you?" said the judge. "Speak." The culprit replied by an interrogative "Eh?" and a vacant stare.

"Speak," said the king, "or I'll hang you on that tree"—pointing to a tree outside the window.

"Hah! hah!" exclaimed the Connaughtman, as if he thought hanging would be great fun.

"What's your name?"—more authoritatively.

"Eh?"

"Hear me," said the king, rising in fury,—"if you don't

answer, I'll hang you as sure as my name is Diarmaid. Where did you come from?"

"There," pointing to the spot where he was caught by the dog.

"But where did you come from before that?"

"Over there," pointing to the spot from whence he had crawled a short time before.

"Where before that?"

"There, pointing to the wood."

"Where do you live? Where were you born?"

"Born! Hah! hah!"

"He's a fool," said the king.

"I am not sure of that," said the brehon.

"You do not think so?"

"The fellow has a cunning eye."

"If I thought so, I'd hang him."

"Hah! hah! hah!"

"You'd like hanging then?" said the king.

"No ;"—shaking his head.

"Why don't you tell where you came from?"

"There," pointing again to the place where he was arrested.

"What brought you here?"

He pointed to his mouth, that he wanted something to eat.

"He's an idiot," said the king—"take him away, and give him food—but keep a close eye on him."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SHAUN O'DAVARAN ASKS MAURICE REGAN TO DEFINE MAN.

"What do you think of that fellow, Shaun?" inquired Maurice, of his friend, the brehon.

"To tell you the truth, Regan, I don't know what to think."

"Then why not try your logic bottle with him?"

"He would not take it."

"Take it! I'd force it down his throat."

"It would be no use."

"Then why not try your *muntorc*, for the devil choke me, but I think he's a rogue."

"The *muntorc* would not act on him: a lie would never choke him. The only way to make that fellow speak would be that proposed by the king—to hang him."

"And why not try hanging?"

"But suppose he should be an innocent—a fool."

"Devil a matter, since he's only a Connaughtman."

"And is, therefore, *a man*."

"Faith I doubt it. How can you call a miserable, deformed creature, like that, *a man!* A man, Shaun O'Davaran"—swelling himself out—a man is a noble-looking being like—like—"

"Maurice Regan."

"No, Shaun, I did not say that"—smiling—"but a man,—a man, Shaun, is made in the image of the Great God; and would you tell me, that ugly, black little baste of a Connaughtman, is anything like the Great God. It's blasphemy, Shaun O'Davaran, blasphemy against heaven to say so."

"That's all very fine, but nothing more than poetry, my dear Maurice ; but what do you mean by a man? define it."

"Nothing more than poetry!" exclaimed Maurice, taking fire at such a reflection on his divine art—"nothing more than poetry! May I ask you what is more, or greater than poetry, except the Great God that made it."

"God did not make poetry."

"But He made the poet, and He made the heavens and the

earth, which are full of poetry. Nothing more than poetry, indeed. I'd like to know what is greater than poetry?"

"*Truth*. There is nothing more beautiful—I confess—but *Truth* is greater and stronger."

"I believe you are right, Shaun, replied Regan, considerably mollified at the brehon's reply—"but is not poetry, truth?"

"*Real* poetry is truth. Truth and poetry are intimately related."

"They are brother and sister, Shaun."

"Children of the same mother."

"Her name, Shaun?"

"*Nature*; and where this relationship does not exist, that which we call poetry, soon droops and dies for want of—"

"It's mother's milk, Shaun."

"And its father's arm, Maurice. It is this which renders poetry immortal. Poetry without Truth, is a flower without a root, which dies in a day. Nature and Truth send down their roots into our hearts and minds, and live there for thousands of years. But we have wandered from the subject of discourse. You were going to define a man."

"Faith I was going to do no such thing, for I don't know what you mean by define."

"To define, according to Aristotle, is to give the species and 'essential difference,' as I think I explained to you before. Now I should wish to know from you, Maurice, in what particular you consider man differs from the lower animals?"

"Well, in the first place, Shaun O'Davaran, man walks on two legs."

"Good! there you have the species; the exact definition of the Greek philosopher: man is a biped. Now for the 'essential difference,' for birds—which we rank with the lower animals—are also bipeds, and walk on two legs."

“*Birds!* why, man, birds don’t walk at all—except occasionally—birds fly in the air—and sure, Shaun O’Davarán, you would not rank birds among the *lower animals*.”

“Why not?”

“Why not! Is it a bird, that flies in the air; and builds his nest in the tops of trees, one of the *lower animals*! Ha! ha! ha!—that’s good.”

“Oh! I see what you mean; you would only reckon horses, and cows, and sheep, and goats——”

“I don’t know what to say about the goats.”

“And hogs and dogs, and cocks and hens, and ducks and drakes——”

“I don’t know what to say to the cocks and hens; they are a kind of amphibious creatures.”

“The ducks and drakes you mean?

“No, but the cocks and hens, for they have wings, though they don’t use them in flying—except in hatching the chickens. Do you think cocks and hens ever flew through the air, like wild ducks, Shaun?”

“Perhaps so; but I’m afraid, Maurice, you will make nothing of the definition of the human animal *homo*, a name you deny to the Connaughtman.

“Arrah don’t bother me any more with your logic; you may call him *homo* if you like; but whisht, Shaun, did you ever think it odd O’Rourke never came to look for his wife?”

“I think, Maurice, the less we say on this subject the better,” rising from his seat to leave the room.

“Sit down there, man; sure there’s no one to hear us. Is it not a wonder, and she such a beautiful creature? What eyes! And what hair! And what lips! And her teeth, as David says, like a flock of sheep; and her neck, like the Temple of Solomon; and——”

"This is out of my department, Maurice; but I believe Solomon, and not David, is considered the author of the poetry you refer to."

"He was a fine poet, and a great judge of female beauty."

"Humph! He had some opportunity of forming an opinion."

"How so?"

"He had—I forgot how many—wives and concubines."

"That's true. Whisper, Shaun; do you think, Shaun, it is wrong for a king to have more wives than one?"

"I do."

"But, Shaun, may I ask, could you have the heart to deliver that beautiful creature into the hands of O'Rourke, that is, if he came after her?"

"I told you before, Maurice, this is no business of ours"—rising and walking towards the door.

"Ha! ha! ha! I knew you could not answer that. Which is poetry or truth the strongest now, Shaun?"

The brehon turned about, and said, with energy, "*truth*."

"And would you give her up?"

"No"—with great decision—for he understood Maurice to mean *Truth* by the pronoun '*her*.' "I would never give her up."

"Bravo! Shaun, bravo! an Irishman's heart for the fair sex, all over the world."

The brehon turns about to explain; he hems, hesitates, and mumbles to himself, "I wish she was with Old Nick, out of this, for her pretty face will get us into a world of mischief, and embroil the whole kingdom. O woman! woman!"

"Sound! Shaun, sound! He's a hero, every inch of him.—Hurrah!"

"Humph!" grunted Shaun, moving off amidst "thunders of applause"—leaving his poetical friend in blissful ignorance of the real state of his sentiments or opinions. "It's no use,"

mused he ; it would be casting pearls to the pigs : poets cannot understand these things in a rational way. The old fool, I have no patience with him."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE COMMUNION OF LOVERS.

Diarmaid sat till late that night, in communion with Dearforgil, in the high tower of the palace of Ferns, which commanded a wide survey of the surrounding country.

We say communion, for they spoke but little. There may be much conversation, where there is no communion of spirit.

"I know not," said Dearforgil, raising her head, that had been bent in reverie, and addressing Diarmaid, who was gazing on the western heavens, which gleamed that night with peculiar splendor, "I know not why my heart should tremble thus, with dark forebodings."

"Forebodings of what?" inquired the king, taking her trembling hand.

"I know not," replied she, weeping.

"For whom do you fear, Dearforgil?"

"For us both."

"Has anything lately occurred to disturb your peace?"

"Do you remember the mysterious woman we met in the Monastery of the Curse of Tara?"

"Yes, I shall not soon forget her '*welcome*,' but what of her?"

"I saw her to-day."

"Where?" with anxiety.

"Near the spot where Enna arrested that strange man."

"Did she see you?"

"No, she was engaged in converse, looking in an opposite direction to the grove where Eva and I were seated."

"In converse; with whom?"

"With the man you called Father Peter; and whom she addressed by the name of Killpatrick."

"*Killpatrick!*" replied the king, starting to his feet.—"Are you sure it was Father Peter you saw with her?"

"Of that I have no doubt; for Nedha knew his voice as well as I, and would have gone up to him, had he not been dressed in a chieftain's robes, and in converse with the woman of the cave."

"Killpatrick! Killpatrick!" continued the king—"did you hear her call him by any other name?"

"Yes, she styled him Donnchadh."

"*Donnchadh Killpatrick!*" reiterated the king, in amazement. "Am I bereft of eye-sight, and the sense of hearing, not to have discovered this cheat before. I thought I knew the face the night he attacked me in the wood at Cill-dara. Let me think, it is, how long, since that dark designing hell-hound has been heard of? Not for the last three or four years. There was a report he had joined a body of Crusaders, and had visited the Holy Land. Donnchadh Killpatrick! but why should the cowled snake follow at my heels? They say, speaking to himself, "he once loved Una——"

Here he ceased his reverie, remembering he was not alone.—"This explains his flight from Tara."

"Diarmaid," said Dearforgil, "will you forgive me for referring to a forbidden subject?"

"Speak on, Dearforgil."

"I would speak of Niall O'Moore, your wife's brother; you

promised me to spare his life, and release him from the palace dungeon. You seized him on the report of this Killpatrick, or Father Peter. Will you release him?"

"I shall do so; and now promise he will never stab this fair bosom again"—laying his hand affectionately on her.

"Why so?"

"He is blind."

"At thy command?"

"Yes."*

"O Diarmaid! this was cruel."

"More cruel to let such a monster go at large, with the power to mar God's most perfect works."

"Diarmaid, I fear we have been all mistaken; and that it was not he who struck the blow. What said he when you accused him?"

"Nothing. But why think you we are mistaken," asked the king, incredulously.

"Dost thou remember the voice of the woman in the cave?"

"Yes."

"Did it strike thy ear as familiar?"

"Not till now,"—in surprise—"What hellish mystery is this?—Proceed."

"Father Eustasius and the woman of the cave are one and the same."

"What!"

"I am sure of it, and so is Nedha."

"Who, in the name of heaven or hell, can she be—or what cause of enmity could she bear thee? It was O'Moore, in woman's garments."

* "Niall na Mordha [O'Moore] Lord of Langhis [Leix] was released from fetters by the King of Leinster, Diarmaid MacMurchada, after he had been blinded, against the guarantee of the laity and clergy."—Four Masters, A.D. 1153.

"It was a woman, and she who spoke to Father Peter to-day was a woman. I could not be deceived; but Nedha saw and heard her speak."

"Go on; speak!" said the king, who appeared astounded.

"I would speak of thy wife, Una."

"Go on!"—terribly excited.

"Report says—"

"Go on."

"That you mur—"

"That I murdered her."

"Even so."

"And you believe it?" looking indignantly reproachful.

"Nay."

"You do *not* believe it?"

"I hold thee as no wife, or woman slayer: thy nature is too noble."

"Dearforgil, for this I thank thee; and thou hast but done me justice; but had I slain her, she had but received—But she is dead."

"Art thou sure?"

"Yes."

"Quite?"

"Quite."

"Then I am mistaken in my surmise."

"Of what?"

"I thought the woman in the cave was she."

"What!" turning deadly pale. "No, I saw not her face. But it is impossible: thou art mistaken.—No, it surely cannot be— But—"

"What evidence hast thou of her death?"

"The strongest I could have. I saw her spirit."

"Where?"

"At Cill-dara."

"How and when?"

"As I lay awake in the loft of the Round Tower, she approached my side. I knew her by the light of the moon—which shone on her face, which was white and bloodless, like a ghost."

Dearforgil, who marked and sympathised with the king's deep and excited state of mind, remained silent for several seconds, and then asked, "Did you address the spirit?"

"No, I had no power."

"Well?"

"It departed as suddenly as it came."

"How looked it?"

"Sorrowful,—and methought—

"What?"

"Reproachful."

"Another long silence intervened. It was broken by a deep sigh from the bosom of Dearforgil.

"Diarmaid," said she, at length, with sad and quiet emphasis, "*thy queen liveth;*" then, raising her clasped hands high above her head, in the attitude of prayer, exclaimed, "O would to God I were dead!" and fell heavily on her face on the floor.

"My God! what is the meaning of all this? Dearforgil, speak. But the Princess of Brefney spoke not. "Fear not, Dearforgil, she is dead—and *damned too*"—between his teeth—"she is dead, and can never injure you. Why say you, she liveth"—bending over her in anguish. "Ho there"—calling aloud for assistance.

"My Lord?" exclaimed a servant, entering.

"Haste thee to O'Moore, and bring him hither. I will convince her to her face."

"Let me depart hence," exclaimed Dearforgil, recovering.

"Never! By the God of Heaven, *never*. All the wives of Leinster, dead or alive, and all the fiends of hell, shall never tear thee from my arms."

"Diarmaid, thy wife liveth."

"Yes, while Dearforgil liveth. Bring him up here"—calling to the servants, who were approaching the door.

"My Lord!" exclaimed the servants, with open mouths.

"Where is he? Bring him in."

"He has escaped, my Lord."

"Escaped! how?"

"The man whom we thought was a fool."

"Ha! ha! ha! exclaimed the king—"then close the door. Now Dearforgil dost thou believe? It was O'Moore thou sawest to-day, in woman's apparel. He was there, arranging with that damned priest, whom you say he called Killpatrick; but here there is some mystery, which I cannot unravel. He was arranging his escape with this Father Peter. So the Connaughtman was no fool, after all. O'Davaran thought so. Ha! ha! ha! Art thou satisfied now?"—kissing her.

Dearforgil smiled, but doubted still.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PALACE FIRED.

Diarmaid, and the Princess of Brefney, were so deeply engaged with the subject of their own thoughts, that they did not observe the appearance of the sky, until sheets of flame lighted up the chamber which they occupied. The next instant the door was

flung open by Maurice Regan, exclaiming, "Save yourself, my Lord, the palace is on fire."

"On fire! Come, Dearforgil"—taking her in his arms. As he hastened down the steps, he inquired, "Where is Eva?"

"O'Davaran has saved her and Conchabar."

"And Enna?" inquired the princess.

"What of him?" inquired the king, anxiously.

"I forgot him, my Lord."

"Save your child," cried Dearforgil, springing from his arms, "and leave me to Regan."

"Can I trust you, Regan, with the princess. A golden collar shall be your reward."

"You can, you can."

He gave her one wild embrace, and rushed into the thickest of the flames, exclaiming, as he passed from chamber to chamber, "Enna, Enna, my son, my son, where are you? Where is my poor blind boy?"

"Come," said Regan, casting his mantle over the face and neck of his precious deposit. "Faith, we can't go that way, any how. We might pass with our lives, but it would spoil her beauty. I have it. We must get through this window. Shaun, Patrick, Peter, is any one there, below, to take the Princess of Brefney?"

"Yes," exclaimed a horseman, who stood beneath the sill: "let her down to me."

The poet passed the princess through the open lattice, with all the care and delicacy for which he was so remarkable; and seeing the horseman placing her securely in the saddle, took the precaution of asking, "Who are you?"

"Tiernan O'Rourke, Prince of Brefney," was the reply, turning his horse's head for flight.

"O mile murther!" exclaimed the poet; "what have I done!
O lady, jewel!"

"What! *Regan*, to surrender the princess to O'Rourke!"
exclaimed Shaun O'Davaran, rushing to the rescue, with a
battle-axe in hand.

"Hold her, Shaun, jewel, and I'm with you in no time,"
leaping from the window, on the horseman's shoulders, which
brought the whole party to the ground.

Before, to use an Irish expression, they could "gather themselves up," they were surrounded by servants rushing from the palace and horsemen from the wood—the former led by Diarmaid, king of Leinster, the latter by Turlough O'Conor, king of Connaught. The contest was, for a few minutes—and only for a few minutes—both fierce and bloody; the palace party, which was small and hastily armed, being soon put hors de combat, by the overpowering, and better equipped force of their assailants; but Diarmaid, before whose arm everything gave way, made himself a clear passage to the side of Dearforgil; and, by the assistance of O'Davaran, and Regan, managed, for some time, to keep his enemies at bay, but they, notwithstanding, closed round him like a ring of fire.

"It is useless, my Lord," said O'Conor stepping out of the ring—commanding his men to draw back—"it is useless to contend further: we are here a thousand strong."

Diarmaid glanced around him, and found that O'Conor had made no idle boast, for the fire flashed on the face of an armed foe wherever he turned,

"What would ye?" he exclaimed.

"I come to rescue the Princess of Brefney from the thrall in
which you hold her; and to restore her to her husband."

"I hold the princess in no thrall. She is free—if she wills—
to return to Brefney. Here she stands, ask her."

"Oh save me from that man," cried she, falling on her knees, before O'Conor.

"From Diarmaid, king of Leinster?" inquired O'Conor.

"Oh no, from O'Rourke."

"How is this, O'Rourke?" inquired O'Conor, turning to the Prince of Brefney.

"He has exercised some damnable spell over her, but I claim her as my wedded wife."

"O save me from him: kill me, or carry me anywhere but not to Brefney.

O'Conor was at first fairly non-plussed, but decided in the end on carrying the princess to the palace of her father, O'Melaghlin, in West Meath.*

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DEARFORGIL AMONG THE TOMBS.

She had but passed the portals of her father's palace, before she heard the king of Meath was dying.

If a parent's heart ever soften to an erring child, it is on the bed of death. Dearforgil arrived in time to receive his blessing, and close his eyes.

She followed his remains to Tara, where she spent much of her time among the tombs.

* "An army was led by Toirdhealbhach na Conchobhair [Turlough O'Conor] against MacMurchadha, King of Leinster, and took away the daughter of Ua Macleachlainn from him, so that she was in the power of the men of Meath.—Four Masters, vol. I. p. 1107. "Nothing has been discovered to show" (says Dr. O'Donovan), "whether she continued to live for any time with O'Rourke after her return from Leinster. *The probability is that she did not.*"—Four Masters, Vol. I. p. 1108.

"*To die,*" is the only remedy prescribed by Dr. Goldsmith for sin and sorrow like Dearforgil's. Query, does death cure all the sorrows of the mind? Is not *religion* a safer, and more certain solace?

"To die, to sleep; and by a sleep to end the heart-ache,
And the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to:
'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished for.
To die, to sleep, to sleep; perchance, to dream—
Aye, there's the rub.
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause."

Religion, we therefore, conclude, is a *safer* remedy than death; for genuine repentance not only removes the penalty, but also the remorse of sin. But it cannot always protect us from its natural consequences. In this world, we generally reap what we sow. Man is not to be propitiated by penitence or prayer, like God; and Dearforgil had not only sinned against man, but against *woman*; and that woman, a queen; and the offence lay rankling in Una's bosom.

It is true, that the woman whom she had offended was, in the sight of God, a greater sinner than herself; and should, therefore, have looked with compassion on the fair penitent; but the wicked have no compassion on the wicked, and the fair have no mercy on the fair.

Dearforgil never left her brother's palace, to wander alone among the ruins of Tara, without being followed, at a distance, by a being almost as fair as herself, gliding after her, among the tombs, marking the anguish of her soul; now, with fiendish satisfaction, and anon with envy, as she witnessed her deep penitence and tears. "Ha! dost thou now feel the serpent's sting. Oh! would that I could weep and pray like her."

She hears Dearforgil praying for herself, if living, and mentally responds—"Yes, I live, to be revenged on thee." She hears her praying for her soul, if dead; confessing, in deep contrition, the enormity of her own sin, and asking the pardon of heaven, and exclaims—"Would she were dead, and damned, too, for I cannot endure this: it would turn me from my purpose; *for die she shall*, unshrived. Oh! hell! hell! hell!"—pressing her hands in anguish on her temples.

There was a fearful struggle between the Powers of Light and Darkness, in Una's soul. How it might have terminated, had she been left to strive alone, we know not; for, at that moment, the Devil sent his angel to minister unto her. Hearing a footstep, she turned round, and saw Father Peter, or Killpatrick, at her elbow.

"Thou hast come in time," she whispered, with something like a smile upon her pale damp face. "If thou hadst delayed another day, her penitence and prayers had turned me from my purpose, and robbed me of my revenge."

"Where is she?"

"Hush!—there"—pointing to a figure in black, kneeling at the foot of the sepulchre of O'Melaghlin, king of Meath.

Killpatrick, looking with something like compassion, asks, "Is that her father's grave?" and sighing, says, "Poor thing! she is very beautiful."

"Come," says Una—seizing his arm, and leading him to the cave.

"Well, Una, what would you?"

"Poison."

Killpatrick looks blank and serious. He had a conscience. Yes, we assert it; Father Peter *had* a conscience. He considered it mortal sin to poison pretty women. To seduce the queen, or to blind Enna, in order to accomplish that seduction,

would not strike him as sins of particular magnitude; but to close up the beaming eyes of the beautiful Dearforgil, in death—it touched his inmost conscience.

But the reader may here probably ask, who was Killpatrick, or Father Peter, for hitherto we have left his character in a cloud.

We shall do so no longer, but reveal him in his true colors, though evil men love not the light.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FATHER PETER UNVEILED.

He whom we have hitherto called Father Peter, was Donnchadh Killpatrick, Lord of Osraighe, or Ossory. He, and the O'Moores of Leix, Queen Una's family, were neighbouring chieftains. Young Donnchadh Killpatrick was a suitor for the hand of Una, the daughter of O'Moore; and had succeeded in gaining her heart, before Diarmaid, King of Leinster, sought her hand.

Against such a rival, it would have been vain to contend, at a period when fathers and brothers were the only umpires; but Killpatrick was not the man to strive openly, or by fair means, for the gratification of any passion, which might be brought about by craft. Having assured himself of Una's love, he allowed the marriage to take place, without urging his own claims. Between the king and queen of Leinster, affection had never existed. With Diarmaid, marriage was a matter of state policy: he sought a rightful heir to his throne; with Una, of pride and ambition, which, to some extent, reconciled her to

the loss of her lover. But Killpatrick, who never lost sight of an object upon which he had once set his mind, followed the footsteps of the queen for years, and glided after her, like a snake in the grass, assuming whatever shape or character seemed best suited to conceal his designs. Diarmaid had two children, a son and daughter, Conchabar and Eva, by his wife, the queen. He had other children by a leman or concubine. One of these, a fine boy, named Enna, whom he tenderly loved, and determined, if possible, to make his heir. When Una, who loved her son, Conchabar, better than her own soul, discovered the king's purpose, she sent for her former lover, Killpatrick, and agreed to sacrifice her virtue on the altar of her, or rather of her son's, ambition. "Make away with, or blind Enna, the son of Diarmaid's leman, and I will refuse you nothing," said she to Killpatrick.

In what way this diabolical object was accomplished, we are not positively informed; but of the fact of Enna's having been blinded, by the hand of Killpatrick, there can be no doubt, inasmuch as it is recorded in the Annals of Ireland, in the following words:—"Enna MacMurchada,* royal heir of Leinster, was blinded by the grandson of Gillaphaidraig, i.e. Donnchadh, Lord of Osraighe."

That night, we learn from the first chapter of this story, Diarmaid, returning from the chase, accompanied by his favorite hound, Thorkil, started in the Queen's Bower, what he first thought was a wolf. He pursued it through the forest, till he arrived at a place where two paths met, and here he found his favorite hound dying, as he thought, from the effects of a stroke,

* We are informed by Dr. O'Donovan, the learned annotator and editor of the Annals of Ireland, that Enna MacMurchadha was the son of Diarmaid, King of Leinster, and the ancestor of the family of Kinsellagh. Vol. I. p. 1168-9. We learn from the same authority that Conor or Conchabar was Dermot MacMurrough's only legitimate son.—Vol. II. p. 20.

which had separated one of the ears from the head, laying it bare to the bone. A portion of a chief's mantle was in the dog's mouth.

Diarmaid hastened to Una's apartments, where it was thought by some, he had murdered her. But this was incorrect. She left the palace that night, and wandered alone through the woods, where she remained concealed, till she gained the sanctuary of Cill-dara. Her lover, who was never suspected by the king, travelled far and wide in search of her, and at length, by accident, discovered the place of her retreat. Whether she regretted this, it is difficult to say. Here he gained admission, under the pretence of "making his soul," and performing a vow. He also made himself useful to the establishment in guarding its extensive flocks on the plains of Kildare. He was thus engaged, serving, like Jacob, for a wife, or concubine, when he met his royal rival, Diarmaid, King of Leinster, whom he first determined to dispatch, and whom he afterwards followed from Kildare to Leinster, and from that to Tara, from which he mysteriously disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE POISONED RING.

"*Poison!*" said Killpatrick, looking very blank indeed.

"Yes," said Una, "Do you hesitate? If so, I have the skein"—drawing the Irish dagger from her bosom—"and shall strike a truer blow the next time. She visits these tombs daily."

"Put up that skein, for God's sake"—shrugging his shoulders—"you gave her a gash the last time, which left an ugly scar on

her shoulder ; but how she has escaped you here, among the tombs, I know not."

" Her prayers protected her : I could not stab her on her knees."

" She looks very beautiful, kneeling thus,"—looking from the mouth of the cave.

" Killpatrick," said the queen, smiling like a beautiful fiend—" Killpatrick, your words sharpen the edge of my revenge."

" For God's sake, don't stab her with that knife. It's a *horrid* death, for a pretty woman."

" I have heard her prayers, and I desire not to wet my hands in her blood."

" You will employ poison, instead?"

" You must do that, Killpatrick."

" I!"—with a start.

" Yes, you."

Killpatrick thought long, in silence. By and bye his brows knitted in dark thought. He looked up and asked, " What is my reward ?"

" What do you require ?"

" The fulfilment of your promise, too long delayed.—The fruit will not be worth plucking, in a few years hence," soliloquised Killpatrick.

" To become your leman ?"

" Even so. But can I trust you. You fled from me before, to the convent of Cill-dara."

" I fled for life."

" You now promise."

" I do."

" Give me the poison."

" Swear to me first, you will use it."

" I swear it."

"On what?"

"On the cross of this sword—by the Curse of Diarmaid—by the shrine of Saint Bridget, by—

"That won't do."

"What do you require?"

"Her *body!* Bring her here. Let me see her laid beside her ancestors, in these tombs, and I am yours."

"Give me the poison"—in desperation.

"Be calm. See, this ring is charmed: mark these curious devices, in golden grotesque figures, inwrought within the baser metal"—drawing from her bosom a steel finger ring, inlaid with gold. "The effect of this charm is to give steadiness to the hand, and resolution to the heart, of which thou dost stand in great need. It has lain within my bosom for years."

"Give it me," said Killpatrick, grasping it with avidity.

"Yes, thou dost require it, in this affair, more than I, though but a weak woman; there is *that* in *my* revenge, which needs no aid of charms. Let me place it on thy finger. The right hand—the middle finger—it fits it like a glove. Mark now the setting. This pearl contains the poison. By placing thy thumb nail within the groove, and pressing on the secret spring, thus, the juice exudes from the orifice in the shell, as from the tooth of the hooded snake. Three drops, mixed with the princess' mead, will be abundant. A single drop, infused within a flesh wound, produces almost instant death. Mark, as you place your nail within the groove—press harder—there issues forth a fine needle, like a bee's sting; a slight puncture from this, in pressing hands, has often produced death. Were you able to take Dearforgil's hand—but the character thou hast assumed debars thee of this refined revenge—thou could'st accomplish her death by a friendly pressure; but the infusion of the poison in her mead will be the wiser way."

"Where procured you this ring?" inquired Killpatrick, with the eye of a basilisk.

"From an Italian priest."

"The Italians are a civilised and polished race of people," issuing from the cave. "She is the devil incarnate, but *still* beautiful.—You shall hear from me to-morrow."

"The poor poltron!" soliloquised the queen. "How came *he* to win my virgin affections? But, then, I was a young and inexperienced girl, without a noble passion in my soul. I now possess ambition; but not for myself, but for *thee*, my noble boy (O! Conchabar, my son, if thou did'st know what it has cost thy mother to guard thy throne, thou would'st love and honor her, even in another's arms) and revenge; and this *for myself*: yes, for myself; and for thee, my brother (thy poor dim orbs!) I have reserved one sweet cup; but, for it, I pay dearly. Though, not so—the price is naught. This body is a poor reward. When I saw my face last, it was thin and care-worn. But *he* is satisfied. Well! he may possess the ring, but the ruby—*love*—is gone. *Love!* I doubt that I ever felt its power. Oh God! how these temples throb"—laying her hand on her forehead. "Would that I could sleep. I'll try"—retiring to a concealed apartment fitted up for her accommodation; "to-night, by twelve or one o'clock, I shall know all—if I can trust him."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

NEDHA IS JEALOUS OF HER MISTRESS.

Notwithstanding the suspicions which possessed the mind of Dearforgil and Nedha, respecting Killpatrick's—alias Father Peter's—real character and designs, he managed to gain admitt-



tance to Melaghlin's palace, and to make some progress in the maid's affections. Her suspicion, or conviction, that he was some great Irish chief, incognito, rendered her the more anxious to win his heart.

Her quick eye caught the glitter of the poisoned ring, the day he returned from Tara. "Where?" she inquired, "did you get the ring, Father Peter? O! gemini, what a beauty!"

He allowed her to play with it, and touch the pearl. He placed it on her finger, as the serpent-charmer does a snake about his child's neck, and asked her "Do you like it?"

"Yes, very much. Who is it for?"

"For your mistress, the princess."

Nedha looked serious. For the first time in her life, she was jealous of her mistress. She might marry the king of Leinster, but Father Peter, or the Irish chief, incognito, fell fairly—she thought—to her share. "What is it for?" inquired she, soberly.

"A wedding ring."

"Is she going to marry?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"The king."

"What king do you mean? Is it the king of Leinster?"

"No, *Death*: and I am to perform the ceremony," looking curiously.

"For shame, Father Peter! I wonder how you can joke on such a subject."

"Tell me, Nedha, is supper over in the king's apartments?"

"No."

"Has the mead gone up?"

"No."

"Is the Princess of Brefney there?"

"Yes."

"Go now, and bring me the tankards of royal mead. I am thirsty."

"She brought them."

"Whose is this?"—tasting it.

"The king's."

"It is good. Let me taste your mistress'."

"Well, thou art curious in thy tastes, to-night; but I must humour thy whims, for I believe, after all, thou intendest to make me a present of that ring."

"Well, we shall see. Hark, some one calls, Nedha."

Exit Nedha.

CHAPTER XL.

FATHER PETER'S INDECISION : THE CONSEQUENCE.

There are bad men, and very bad men, who are wanting in moral, or immoral courage, to advance straight to the object, or action they have taken in hand. Killpatrick glided after Una like a serpent.. He approached the work she had given him to perform, sideways, like a crab. Though he had promised to poison Dearforgil; to murder a beautiful woman, as we have stated, was to do violence to his conscience, for the deity, whom he delighted to honor, was the Goddess of Beauty; and had he not been enslaved by the charms of Una, those of Dearforgil would have ensnared him. He felt no compunction in blinding Enna, for he was of the masculine gender, but, to seal up the beaming eyes of the Princess of Brefney in death! He raised his hands and eyes to heaven. It was one of the seven deadly sins. But this was the condition of possessing Una, and she was

not a woman to forego her revenge. He was verily in a strait. He would much rather poison her brother.

Before him stood two cups of mead: one for Dearforgil, another for Melaghlin. He sat with his elbows on the table, playing with the poisoned ring, now holding it above one, and now above the other cup. By and bye he pressed his nail into the groove, and held it there, till the poison appeared in a green globule, at the orifice in the pearl, like an asp's eye. He continued the pressure, till the globule hung above one of the cups. It is Melaghlin's. He remembers his compact, and hastily shifts his hand, and in doing so, too large drops fall from the poisoned ring, but into which cup, he is not certain.

Nedha enters, takes up the goblets, and carries them into the royal chamber.

"I leave it to God and the Holy Virgin, to decide, for by the soul of Saint Kevin I know not into which cup the poison fell." But, again, remembering his compact with Una, he calls back the maid—"Nedha."

"Well?"

He hesitates and hems.

"You called me."

"It's no matter. Go—carry in the mead."

There was weeping and lamentation in the palace of Tara. Melaghlin the bon-vivant king of East Meath died that night of poison. The circumstance is thus recorded by the Four Masters :—"Melaghlin, son of O'Melaghlin, king of Meath, and of the greater part of Leinster, died in the thirtieth year of his age, of a poisonous drink, in the flood of his prosperity and reign, on the night of the festival of Brightit, after the victory of penance. The death of this man was like swine fattening by hot fruit, like a branch cut down before its blossoming."*

*Four Masters, A.D. 1155.

Dearforgil waited the performance of her brother's funeral obsequies, and then sought refuge in the monastery of Mellifont. Here we shall leave her, for a time, and return to Diarmaid, whom we left at Ferns.

CHAPTER XLI.

A CABINET COUNCIL: PEACE OR WAR.

It is not necessary for *men*, either "to die," or enter a monastery, in order to escape the guilt or shame of unlawful love.

There is but little shame in *their* case—more shame for the world, which makes the distinction—and as a necessary consequence, the sin lies light on their souls. We form our estimate of transgression from the way in which the world views it; hence, the sin which bears down the soul of woman in penitence before God, is removed from man's soul, at least he *thinks* so, by a single "peccavi." But give us—after the "*fountain opened for sin and uncleanness*"—woman's tears, tears like those that washed the Saviour's feet!

"Le malheureux qui prie, est déjà consolé."*

Yes, poor guilty one, thou hast *thy* reward: thy Saviour makes thee a rich compensation for the injustice of the world.

But men, especially kings and great men, have ambition, the lion passion of the soul, to fall back upon. The master passions which usurp dominion over the mind, at different periods of life, are as diverse as the beasts in the Apoclypse, and as fierce as the animals by which the poet Dante was nearly destroyed. In

* "The unhappy who pray are always consoled."—Millevoye.

youth, it is the Panther of Concupiscence ; in mature manhood, the Lion of Ambition ; in old age, the greedy Wolf.

But there are exceptions : there are young men whose greed would lead us to conclude they had been suckled by the wolf, and old ones, whose concupiscence shame their grey hairs.

Diarmaid, at this time, was near forty——

“*Near forty!*” I think I hear some learned Irish antiquarian exclaim, with a contemptuous “humph!”

Now, Doctor O’Donovan, I must insist you will not mention the exact ages of either my hero or heroine. Ye antiquarians would destroy all the romance of history, if you were allowed to have your say. A man may be *near* a number, after he has *passed* it, as well as before he has arrived at it. And you must confess, that I am nearer the truth than the Irish historian, Thomas Moore. What more would you have of a writer of romance?

But to what animal am I to compare the King of Leinster, after the raid, and burning, and carrying away of Dearforgil? I am at a loss to decide. I would say a lion, as it is the noblest beast in the forest; but a lion loses its prey without losing its temper; and therefore fear the requirements of truth will oblige me to select the bear, though the comparison may prejudice my hero, in the estimation of my readers.

Yes, Diarmaid, the truth must be told, you were, for at least two years after the departure of Dearforgil, more like a bear—a bear with a sore head, or a bear robbed of its whelps—than any other animal. It was dangerous to go near you; and no one, save Enna and Eva, dare open his or her mouth in your presence; or, you would open yours, and then——“The Lord have mercy on my soul,” as the man said, who had his head in the lion’s mouth.

But this mood, which was a sort of cross between the Panther

of Concupiscence and the Lion of Ambition, gave way in time to the more noble properties of the king of beasts. It was while you were meditating revengeful conquest, you were savage: when the idea of becoming supreme monarch seized you, and the necessity of establishing your power by a stronger government, and better laws possessed you, you sought again the society of your brehon, Shaun O'Davarán, and again lent an ear to the pleasant and poetical nonsense of your faithful servant, Maurice Regan.

"Faith, Shaun, I believe the king is coming round again. He gave me one of his old kind looks, as he met me in the hall to-day; and said, "Well, Maurice."

"What said you?"

"Elegant, your honor, and happy to see your Lordship's Majesty looking so well again."

"What did he reply?"

"Nothing, but held down his head, and walked off."

"Make no allusion to his changed mood, Maurice. Meet him, as if you observed no change."

"I believe you are right: what was that he was saying to you about O'Conor?"

"He was asking me if I heard of Turlough's death.*—But hush! here he comes. Remember what I told you."

"*Bathershin!*" said Maurice, with his hand on the side of his nose. "Do you think," continued he, raising his voice, that the king might hear him, "that his son Roderick will be supreme monarch?"

"What's that you say about Roderick O'Conor?" inquired the king, with a mild and social mien, and tone of voice, which took

* A.D. 1156. Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, King of Connaught, Meath, Breifne, and Munster, and of all Ireland, *with opposition*, flood of the glory and splendour of Ireland, the Augustus of the West of Europe, a man full of charity and mercy, hospitality and chivalry, died after the sixty-eighth year of his age."—Four Masters, p. 1119.

even those by surprise who had noticed his previous change of mood.

The king was not only in the habit of discussing important political questions, in an easy and familiar style, with his ollav and brehon, but of setting them by the ears; for Maurice Regan's humourous remarks, sharp repartees, and sometimes serious contentions with O'Davarán, were like the flail of Talus among the wheat. No other process would have made the brehon "shell out" so much precious truth. While Regan threshed, Diarmaid gleaned.

"I was asking the brehon, your Majesty," said the ollav, "whether he thought Roderick O'Conor would put up for supreme monarch."

"Well, O'Davarán, what say you?"

"He will *put up* for it, no doubt, my Lord."

"Yes, he has presumption enough for anything; but do you think he will gain it?"

"Not if your Majesty don't like," broke in Maurice.

Diarmaid smiled, as he asked, "What will MacLoughlin of Ulster say?"

"He will dispute the supremacy with O'Conor," replied the brehon.

"But O'Rourke will unite his forces with those of Connaught," replied the king. He had not dared to have made that raid into Leinster, the year before last, without O'Conor at his back."*

"O'Rourke fears MacLoughlin more than he does O'Conor," replied the brehon. "The Shannon is a barrier between Connaught and Brefney, not easily passed, though O'Loughlin passed it—as O'Conor knew to his cost; and re-passed it at Innsin-

* "A.D. 1154. A plundering army was led by O'Rourke into Leinster. He plundered both churches and territories."—Four Masters.

Struthra, restoring O'Rourke much of the territory we took from him, two years before.”*

“ Then you are of opinion that MacLoughlin O'Neill, king of Ulster, will attain the supremacy.”

“ That all depends on your Lordship’s Majesty,” said the ollav : “ its an even balance between them : it all depends upon the scale in which you throw your sword.”

“ But suppose I throw it into neither.”

“ And let them pull it and haul it between them. Very good, faith.”

“ No, but assume the supremacy myself.”

“ Better still. Bravo ! What say you O’Davarán.”

“ The question takes me by surprise,” said O’Davarán, with a sober face—“ but”—

“ *But!*—but what ?” asked Regan, with indignation.

“ But what, O’Davarán ?” inquired the king, mildly.

“ I doubt that your Majesty is prepared ; and the prestige of the country would be against it.”

“ So it was against Turlough O’Conor, the first king of Connaught, who assumed the title. My ancestor, Diarmaid MacMael-na-mbo, king of the Danes of Dublin, was monarch of Ireland, *without opposition*—as was the great Cathaeir Mor, and many others. If we possess not the prestige, we must create it, or rather revive, or re-create it. If Roderick O’Conor seek the supremacy, and the right of imposing tribute on Leinster because one of his house assumed the supreme kingship—and *not* ‘ with-

* “ An army of the North of Ireland was led by Muircheartach Ua Lochlainn, into Connaught, till he reached Dun-Imgain, in Magh-Aei ; and he plundered the fort and destroyed the corn crops of Magh-Luirg and Magh-Aei. He did not, however, obtain cows or hostages. He afterwards directed his course across the ford of Innsin-Struthra into Breifne, and compelled the men of Breifne to submit to Tighearnan Ua Ruairé ; and Ua Lochlainn banished Godfrey Ua Raghnallach into Connaught.” Dr. O’Donovan thinks this Innsin-Struthra was a ford on the Shannon.

out opposition'—I, by the same rule, may seek the subjugation of Connaught, and the whole kingdom, for how often have our descendants sat as kings supreme."

"And why not?" exclaimed Maurice Regan, looking as proud as a peacock—"was not Mael-na-mbo, your great-great-great-grandfather." This he pronounced with an emphasis, which plainly implied, that the more 'greats,' the stronger the king's claim to the supreme kingship of Ireland. "What!" he indignantly exclaimed—"is it because Roderick's father—his *own* father—mind you—took tribute in Leinster. Did not your great-great-great-grandfather, take the tribute of all Ireland, and the whole of Wales and Dublin?"

"My great-great-grandfather, Maurice," replied the king, who did not see the force of adding a third great,—for addition may possess—as in this instance—the effect of subtraction.

"True, my Lord, he was only your great-great-grandfather—to say nothing of Cathaeir Mor, from which you are the twenty-fourth in descent. Let him show a title like *that*, my Lord."*

"The older the better, you think, Maurice," said the king, smiling.

"Of course, my Lord; nothing like the old stock."

"Well, O'Davaran, what say you to Maurice Regan's argument?"

"Very forcible, my Lord—'cows far off have long horns'—but I would rather your claim rested on the circumstance of your father's having enjoyed the title. But O'Conor's title, will, no doubt, be disputed by O'Loughlin O'Neill. If I might presume to give an opinion, I should say, let them settle the dispute between them, first."

"I believe you are right, O'Davaran. But I understand Roderick O'Conor's hands are full of domestic quarrels in Con-

* For the king's genealogy—see Four Masters, vol. I. p. 862.

naught. He has already imprisoned three of his brothers, and blinded the eldest."*

"But should MacNeill O'Loughlin come to Leinster, and demand the *borumha*?" [tribute.]

"I would pay it," replied the brehon.

"*Pay it!*" exclaimed Maurice Regan, with indignation. "Is it due? What claim has he? 'Render to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsars.' By my faith, if he came to Leinster, I'd treat him as Bran Dubh treated his ancestor, Aedh, king of Ulster."

"How was that Maurice?" asked the king: "I don't remember the story."

"Small blame to your Majesty, for it happened in A.D. 595, and was on this wise:—Aedh, king of Ulster, came to Leinster to revenge the death of his son Comuseach. When Bran Dubh, king of Leinster, heard he had advanced with his army as far as the river Brighe, he sent Bishop Aidan, his own half brother, to ask time till he should muster his forces to meet him. Fair play's a jewel. But he refused this reasonable request, and sent back the bishop with insulting language, saying, 'If he did not send him his son's *eric*, in the shape of 3,600 oxen, 500 horses, and 5,000 sheep, and plenty of cooked meat for his army, he'd know the difference before twelve o'clock that night.' The King of Leinster, your Majesty's great-great-great-great ——."

"No matter Maurice, go on."

"The king of Leinster, your Majesty's——was fairly puzzled to know what to do; so he took with him the bishop, and a hundred and twenty young heroes, to reconnoitre the

* "The three sons of Turlough O'Conor were taken prisoners. Brian Breifneach was blinded by [his brother] Roderick O'Conor."—Vide Four Masters. A.D. 1156. Blinding was very frequently practiced in Ireland, at this period; especially when it disqualifed for ruling. We find that the same cruel and barbarous habit prevailed in England, at an earlier period. Shakespeare, in his *King Lear*, gives a horrible example of it, when Cornwall blinds Gloucester.

enemy's camp; where he saw swarms of green, and yellow, and red birds—as he thought—hovering over it. ‘What sort of birds are these?’ said he, turning to the bishop. ‘They are birds of prey,’ replied the man of God—for Bishop Aidan had cursed him, and his army, for the bad language he had given him, when he went to his camp, as an ambassador of peace—‘They are birds of prey,’ said he; and with that he raised his hands to heaven, and cried, with a loud voice, to all the birds of the air, ‘come gather yourselves together,’ says he, ‘that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both small and great.’ I’m mighty puzzled to know how to act,’ says the king: ‘I wish I knew the strength of his army. Who will go as a spy to his camp?’ ‘I will,’ says Ron Kerr, the young chief of Imail. ‘Do, and my blessing go with you,’ says the bishop. Well, he dressed himself in the garb of a leper; rubbed his body and face all over with rye-dust, mixed with the blood of a calf; fixed his knee in the socket of a wooden leg—which he borrowed from a cripple—and hid his sword and trumpet under a cloak; and to complete the deception, carried a beggar’s wallet at his back. In this plight he stood before the royal pavilion, and asked to see the king of Ulster. The king asked him, what he was, and where he came from? ‘I was a small farmer,’ says he; ‘but the king of Leinster’s people destroyed my cottage, and broke my quern, and spade: and I had to take to the road, as you see me—God help me,’ trying to disguise his manly voice, and martial bearing.—‘Don’t be down hearted,’ says the king. ‘If Bran Dubh sends me my son’s *eric*, I’ll give you twenty milch cows.’ ‘If that’s the case, my fortune is made,’ said Ron Kerr, ‘for as I came from Kilbelat, I saw thousands driving this way.’ As he said this, there was a twinkle in his warlike eye, which made Aedh

suspect he was a spy in the camp; but he sent out messengers to inquire if what he said was true. The messengers returned to say that 3600 oxen, with hampers of provisions, were approaching. ‘Admit them within the camp,’ said the king, ‘and prepare for supper.’ They were no sooner all admitted, than Ron Kerr blew his horn, and up sprung 2700 warriors from the hampers, and cut and slashed among the Ulstermen, like Gideon among the Midianites. As for Ron Kerr, he threw off his wooden leg, drew his sword, and cut off Aedh’s head, which he brought back as a trophy to his king.” *

“That is the story, is it; and you would wish me to pay O’Loughlin the borumha, in the same coin,” said the king, smiling, as the ollav finished his tale.

“I would, your Majesty,” replied Maurice.

“I shall think over it, Regan, for I like not paying tribute. But what about the green and yellow birds, the king saw hovering over the camp?”

“I forgot that: they were their standards, waving in the wind; but, true enough—according to the bishop’s prediction—they flapped their wings, that night, over their dead bodies. There is no gainsaying the words of the clergy.”

“I believe so,” replied Diarmaid, leaving the apartment, “for be their words true or false, the majority will credit them.”

“I fear, Shaun,” said Regan, looking after the king, “I fear—”

“What do you fear?”

“That the king is not a good Christian.”

“Humph,” replied Shaun, breaking up the council. But,

* The story in the text is found, *with the exception of a few variations*, in the historical tract entitled “*Borumha Laighean*.” In the life of Saint Aidan, or Maidocus, we find the following passage, which gives some countenance to the tale:—“Iste [Brandub] vir astassisimus et valde probus in militia erat, et agens astute, intravit audaciter in castra inimicorum, et occidit ipsum regem Hibernie. Edum filium Ainmirech; et maximam cedem nobilium virorum Hiberniae cum eo fecit.”—Trias Thaum, p 211.

looking back—"you would think it no sin to murder O'Neill."

"What! murder him?"

"Yes, *murder* him: was not that the drift of your story."

"Stop there."

Exit Shaun in displeasure.

Maurice scratches the side of his head.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE BORUMHA.

"The *Borumha*, the payment of which formed the subject of our discussion yesterday, was first imposed, if I mistake not"—said the king, addressing the ollav—"by—"

"By *Tuathal*, the Legitimate, as he was called," replied Maurice Regan—"though I very much doubt—"

"No matter about that now, Regan. It was paid during—"

"During the reigns of forty monarchs, and then stopped, for a time; and was afterwards re-imposed for the murder of the thirty royal virgins, by Enna Niadh, king of Leinster."*

* A.D. 241, Four Masters. The massacre of the girls at Cleanfearta at Teamhair, by Dunlang, son of Enna Niadh, King of Leinster. Thirty royal girls was the number, and a hundred maids with each of them. Twelve princes of the Leinstermen did Cormac put to death together, in revenge of that massacre, together with the exaction [recté re-exaction] of the Borumha. "There is," says Dr O'Donovan, "a curious Irish tract, on the original imposition, and final remittance of this Borumha, or cow-tribute, preserved in the book of Lecan, and another copy of it in a vellum manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin."

The Annals of Clonmacnoise, gives the yearly amount of this tribute as follows:—150 cows, 150 hogs, 150 coverlets, or pieces of cloth, to cover beds withal; 150 caldrons, with two passing great caldrons, consisting in breadth and deepness five fists for the King's own brewing; 150 couples of men and women, in servitude, to draw water on their backs, for the said brewing, together with 150 maids, with the King of Leinster's own daughter, in like bondage and servitude.

"If Enna did anything so horrible as that, he deserved——".

"And a hundred maids with each of them."

"What! He murdered three thousand maids, along with the thirty royal princesses!"

"Without doubt, your Majesty."

"Shocking! Well, Eva," said the king, addressing his daughter, a beautiful girl of about twelve years of age, who stood at his side, and listened with intense interest, while the ollav told of the massacre of the thirty royal virgins, and three thousand maids, "what say you to the tribute—that we should pay it, after such a fearful massacre?"

"I think so," said Eva, timidly.

"But suppose O'Loughlin should revive the custom of demanding not only the cows, and hogs, and coverlets, and cauldrons, but also a hundred and fifty maids, and with them, *the King of Leinster's daughter*;^{*} what would you say then, Eva? Must I give you up?"

Eva replied by laying her head on her father's bosom.

"Well?"

She raised her face, smiling through her tears, and replied, "He was a bad man that made that law."

"Who was it, O'Davaran?" inquired the king, addressing the brehon, who sat silently waiting to see to what conclusion all these discussions would tend.

"King Cormac, son of Art, son of Conn, in the Sovereignty of Ireland."

"Devil choke him!" said Regan.

"They say *it was the devil that choked him*,"[†] replied the brehon.

* Vide end of last note.

[†] A.D. 266. "Forty years was Cormac, son of Art, son of Conn, in the sovereignty of Ireland, when he died at Cleiteach, the bone of a salmon sticking in his throat, on account of the siabhradh [genii] which Maelgenn, the

"But suppose O'Loughlin should come to Leinster and claim your hand for one of his sons; or O'Conor ask you in marriage for one of his brothers, you surely could not refuse?"

"I hate them."

"You hate them. Where shall I go, then, for a husband for you? There is Diarmaid O'Melaghlin, of Meath, or Domnall, his brother."

Eva shakes her head.

"Neither of them. There is MacCarthy, of Munster: he has a number of sons; and the O'Brien of Thomond, the descendants of Brian Borumha, who revived the tribute."

Eva shakes her head again.

"None of them. Why it is hard to please you. I fear I shall not be able to find you a husband in Ireland, unless you take a Dublin Dane. What do you say to the son of Thorkil?"

"Is it the grandson of the man who treacherously slew my grandfather, and buried him with a dog? I'd die first."

"Then you have nothing for it but to go to England or Wales. Would you cendescend to take a Norman knight?—report says they are noble men and brave warriors."

"Are they?"

"Yes."

"I'll have a Norman knight, then."

"Then that's decided," said the king, with some significance, rising and leaving the apartment.

"Ha! ha! ha!" exclaimed the ollav, "A Norman knight, to wed the daughter of Diarmaid, king of Leinster! No, *mo coleen dhas*, you shall have one of the sons of king Henry."

Druid, incited at him, after Cormac had turned against the Druids, on account of his adoration of God in preference to them. "Wherefore a devil attacked him, at the instigation of the Druids, and gave him a painful death."—Four Masters, vol. I. p. 115-117.

"No, I won't have a king's son, Maurice; I don't like kings' sons: I'll have a Norman knight: my father said so."

Please yourself, and you will please me, my darling; and the Norman knights must be bad enough, if they are no better than the brothers of O'Conor of Connaught, or the sons of MacCarthy of Munster."

"You know, Maurice, they are always fighting."

"As for that, my jewel, the devil a much difference between the Normans and themselves."

"Yes, there is, Maurice; the Normans fight, and have done with it; but Irish kings are *always* fighting."

"Never at peace, except they're at war: I believe you are right, child."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SYNOD OF MELLIFONT,* A.D. 1157.

At the time of which our story treats, no Irish king, no matter how pacific his disposition, or policy, could remain perfectly neuter. To do so would be like standing unarmed in the midst of battle, for the whole kingdom, from north to south, and from east to west, was up in arms.

The only voice which made itself heard, amidst the din of battle, or which could say to these troubled waters, "*Peace, be still,*" was that of the church; and this produced but a lull amidst the storm.

* It is in the Four Masters called the Monastery of Droichead-atha [i.e. Drogheda]. This is the name by which the Abbey of Mellifont is usually called in the Irish Annals."—Dr. O'Donovan's notes *in loco*.

The church, which had no power of curing the evil, adopted the policy of making these blood-thirsty transgressors pay for the pleasure of breaking each other's heads. An extra penalty was imposed where an injury was done to the person of a churchman, or the property of the church, or any one under the church's protection. If a timber chapel, or monastery, was burned down, the incendiary was made to build one of hewn stone. In this way the contentions of the laity rendered a very handsome profit to the clergy. The reader of Irish annals understands all this, and feels in no wise surprised, after reading the bloody records of the life of Turlough O'Conor, to find churchmen recording his death, in terms like these :—“A.D. 1156. A man full of charity and mercy, hospitality and chivalry, died after the sixty-eighth year of his age, after having made his will, and distributed gold and silver, cows and horses, among the clergy, and churches of Ireland in general.”

But the church adopted the sound policy of making these men their own executors. This was especially the case where a monastery was to be erected, or a new church built, or consecrated. On such occasions the Irish kings displayed great liberality, and wiped out long scores of outstanding sins.

That I do those men no injustice by this remark, will be evident to all who compare the conduct of O'Loughlin, O'Rourke, and, let me add also, the fair and fragile Dearforgil, with the offerings which they presented at the abbey of Mellifont, to which I am now about to conduct the reader. If this be the true state of the case, can we, with any degree of truth or propriety, call religious houses, erected by such hands, evidences of the *piety* of our ancestors, or offerings acceptable to God: “*Thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed blood upon the earth in my sight,*” was the language of God to David, when contemplating the building of the temple. “*When*

ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot, away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."

There were present at the Synod convened at Mellifont,* seventeen bishops, together with the Pope's Legate, and the successor of Saint Patrick, and a countless number of clergy and laity. Irish kings and princes were, to use a familiar illustration, which I hope will be excused on such an occasion, "as thick as blackberries."

O'Loughlin, King of Ulster, presented a hundred and forty milch cows, which were driven into the rich pastures of the monastery; and sixty ounces of gold, to God and the clergy, for the health of his soul.

O! that some faithful priest had stood up in that assembly, and proclaimed, "*Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold.*" But it was as well not, for no one would have believed it, and ten to one but he had had his head broken. He [O'Loughlin] also granted a townland near Mellifont, to the monks of the abbey.

But the great attraction of this synod or assembly, was concentrated upon one person, the frail and beautiful, and sincerely penitent Dearforgil, the Princess of Brefney, and daughter of the most illustrious line of Irish kings, the great O'Melaghlinns. Her offering consisted of sixty ounces of pure gold, a golden chalice for the

* A.D. 1157. "A Synod was convened by the clergy of Ireland and some of the kings, at the Monastery of Droicheat-atha, the church of the monks, [recté Mellifont]. There were present seventeen bishops, together with the Legate and the successor of Patrick; and the number of persons of every other degree was countless. Among the kings were Muircheartach Ua Lochlainn, Tighearnan Ua Ruaire, Ua hEochadha, and Ua Cerrbhail."—Four Masters.

virgin's altar, and nine rich altar-cloths, wrought by her own hands, and deeply fringed with gold, *i.e.* a cloth for each of the nine altars. These were Dearforgil's first offerings; but she was to present on the morrow an offering, whose rich magnificence outweighed them all. She was about to offer up herself, to God and the church; in other words, *to take the veil*; to draw a curtain between her soul and the world, to shroud that divine form in serge, to shade those heavenly orbs beneath a hood, to—— We must leave the climax to the reader's imagination. We have no genius for description.

Most of my readers are aware that before a nun, or noviciate, takes the black veil, and bids an everlasting adieu to the world, and its vanities, she arrays herself in gorgeous attire—the expression is not too strong—this, of course, gives greater effect to the magnitude of the sacrifice.

At the tinkling of a silver bell, the grand procession of the day advanced up the middle aisle of the great church of Mellifont, preceded by priests, waving silver censers, breathing holy incense. The procession was pioneered by the Primate, and Apostolic Legate, Saint Gelacius, Lord Bishop of Lismore. His steps were followed by a woman of transcendent beauty, whose garments—to use a scriptural term—were of wrought gold, and over whose noble brow, and alabaster bosom, descended the drapery of a gossamer veil, which gave her the appearance of a goddess shining from out a silver cloud. Twelve virgins, her companions, followed her,—

“Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best.”

“Who is that?” whispered one in the crowd, to O'Loughlin, the moment this beautiful apparition broke upon their view.

“Dearforgil, the Princess of Brefney. See, there is Diarmaid, the King of Leinster, standing near that pillar. How pale he

looks. And, by the Holy Virgin, there is her husband, O'Rourke, just behind him. But he retires out of view as the procession advances."

"Where? Where?"

"See, he comes out again—the tall man with the red hair and scarred face."

The Prince of Brefney's profession—arms—was written in deep scars across his brow, which was savage in the extreme. The upper lip, left nostril, and eye-brow were divided by the thrust of a lance, which ran from the chin to the top of the head, leaving a deep furrow along the forehead, plowing up the flesh to the very bone; but he prided himself as much, on these marks of his prowess, as does a New Zealander, on his tatooed face, to which the Irish chieftain's bore some resemblance. His hair was red, and his eyes blue, but the pupils had somewhat the hue of the fox, and dilated, or contracted, with the same facility. In stature he was a giant, with a coarse husky voice. This was the man, for whom O'Melaghlin, king of Meath, broke faith with Diarmaid, king of Leinster, the handsomest man of his day, compelling his lovely daughter to violate her plighted troth.

Diarmaid stood like one transfixed, as Dearforgil advanced up the middle aisle, to the great altar, where she was about to communicate; never, for one instant, taking his eyes from the one object which seemed to absorb every feeling of his mind, and passion of his soul. He looked like one under the fascination of some mesmeric charm.

Diarmaid had seen, and loved Dearforgil in her father's palace, when she was young and fair, but she now appeared to his enraptured senses more like a holy saint or angel, than woman. This resulted, to some extent, from the associations of the place, and the grandeur of the ceremony, in which she took so

prominent a part ; but it also resulted from the maturity of her charms.

We shall not too closely analyse the motives which induced Diarmaid to visit Mellifont, and take his place so near the great altar, but let it be recorded to his credit, that as the procession approached, every other feeling of his mind seemed to give place to that of devotion. He, as well as all around him, were seized upon and fully possessed by the *genius loci*, or the spirit of the place. Religion, for the time being, was the mistress of his soul, for he never looked upon it, under so lovely an incarnation before. There must, no doubt, subsist an intimate relationship between Love and Religion. The imagination of a true lover makes a goddess of the object of his affections, and often presents to her the *pure* incense of a heart, unadulterated by human passion. It affects the mind and soul only ; and not the members of the body.

But to speak of Dearforgil. Religion, may, for a time, overcome, but it cannot, finally, extinguish human love. It may seem to burn it up, and leave nothing but cold ashes behind it, in the nun's, or hermit's cell. Religion could not extinguish love like that which Dearforgil felt for Diarmaid, to whom she had given her virgin affections.

The king stood enveloped in a mantle, with his person partially concealed behind the pillar, his dark eye fixed upon the princess. Dearforgil never once raised her head, but seemed altogether absorbed in holy contemplation ; but, notwithstanding her bowed head, and holy contemplation, as she neared the pillar, a pale pink tint diffused itself across her brow. It appeared beneath her gossamer veil, like the colouring of a cloud behind which the harvest moon lies hid. The nearer she approached, the deeper became the flush, until not only face and brow, but neck and shoulders, glowed like the mid-day sun.

But the colour faded as quickly after passing the pillar, as the tints we catch, in crowded streets, from stained glass; giving place to the palor of death. She seemed to hasten to the altar, and, as Diarmaid thought, with unsteady step. There she knelt, bowing lowly. Nedha knelt beside her. "Nedha," said she, in a faint voice, "take me hence, I am sick."

Nedha raised her eyes to her mistress' face. It was as pale as a corpse.

The officiating priest stood before her, with the "elements." "Arise, my child," he whispered in her ear—for he saw the trouble of her soul—"this heavenly food will strengthen thee."

She raised her head. He placed the wafer on her parched tongue. She tried to swallow it. There was a spasmotic movement through her frame, a deep sigh: "Nedha, I'm dying," she exclaimed, falling on her face before the altar.

Nedha screamed aloud.

Diarmaid, who saw her fall, was rushing forward to aid her, when a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned quickly round, and encountered the malignant and jealous glance of the Prince of Brefney. "Interfere, Righ Diarmaid, at your peril," said O'Rourke.

Diarmaid cast upon him a look of fierce defiance, and stalked proudly from the church.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE CONNAUGHTMAN CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

Diarmaid stood without the porch, for several minutes, engaged with his own moody thoughts, when his quick eye caught the

person of a rude hind, driving a pig before him; which he did, in a somewhat awkward manner—there is art in pig-driving, as in other things. “Hallo! my fine fellow, I think I met you before.”

“Me, your honour?”

“Yes, you; the innocent Connaughtman we caught at Ferns, who fired the castle. Do you think I could forget you?”

The fellow looked up again, in the king's face, and if he was a Connaughtman before, he was Father Peter now, and no mistake. Diarmaid seized him by the collar, and stared at him with that kind of utter astonishment we do at the pancake which a modern conjuror boils in our hat: “What, *Father Peter!* And *you* were the ‘innocent,’” holding him fast—lest, Proteus-like, he should take another shape. “And you are the innocent Connaughtman I have to thank for the firing of my palace, and the escape of O'Moore. Ho! ho!” still holding him,—“I begin to see.”

Father Peter's jaw fell. He made a mistake, a capital mistake; he assumed one shape too many. To escape the punishment due to the Connaughtman, he took the shape of Father Peter, to whom greater punishment was due; but the king was as quick in marking the distinctions of shape, as he was in taking, or changing them. He was caught from the very perfection or excess of his art. But Father Peter was never actually beaten to the wall. He recovered his confidence, and returned the king's scrutinizing glance, with a broad humorous grin. How many a rogue, like him, has redeemed his life by his wit and humor. There is nothing like it for disarming strong men.

“Where are you going?” said the king, involuntarily unloosing his hold. “Where did you get that pig?” He was driving a pig.

Father Peter, or Killpatrick, shrugged his shoulders, and grin-

ned more broadly, as he replied, "*Musha*," rubbing his chin on his shoulder.

"*Musha*, what, you scoundrel?"

"I found it."

"Where?"

"Among O'Rourke's cattle," with a shrewd side glance.

"Know you not, sirrah, that is robbery," said Diarmaid, assuming an indignation he by no means felt.

"Arrah, my Lord Righ, where did O'Rourke get the fat heifers, he gave to the church to-day?"

"Where?"

"He stole them."

"Humph." Where are you taking it?"

"To the priest, for the health of my soul."

"Why, I thought you were a priest yourself."

"Musha, shaking his shoulders, and turning about his head, with a half sheepish, roguish, and humorous expression.

"Well, don't mind your soul now: you can attend to that, by and bye; but hear me. I know you for a most confounded rogue."

Peter grunted dissent, and said, in his sleeve, "you don't know me yet."

"You have deceived me more than once; but tell me now, and speak like a man, can I trust you? I will pay you well."

Peter of the pigs grunted assent.

"Good! Take these as a beginning"—slipping some heavy pieces of gold into his hand. "Do you know where the Princess of Brefney lodges? Where about her chambers are?"

"I think I could find them."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Go, there, and see Nedha, her maid; and give her this



letter, for her mistress. If she asks you who sent it, say the Abbot of Glendalough."

Peter-na-Muc took the letter, thrust it into his bosom, and moved off with a grunt of satisfaction, driving the pig before him.

"Don't mind the pig."

Father Peter, without seeming to heed the king, continued to drive the pig before him.

"Do you hear me, you scoundrel. What do you want with that pig?"

Father Peter, turning his head half round. "Do you wish me to deliver your letter?"

"Of course."

"Very well"—driving on the pig.

"But what the d—l do you want with the pig?"

"I have a reason."—"Hurrish"—to the pig.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DELIVERY OF THE LETTER.

Father Peter was not the first, or, at any rate, the last, who drove his pig to, or through the door, where he sought egress himself.

"Hush! hush! hurrish! out, you dirty brute," exclaimed Nedha, addressing the pig, which was grunting at the door of her mistress' chambers. "Take your pig out of this, man; how dare you bring it here," addressing the driver.

"Hurrish, there. The curse of Peter on you"—to the pig.—
"The creature is hungry"—addressing Nedha.

"Then take it home and feed it. Do you know whose apartments these are?"

"I suppose they are yours, my lady,"—with genuine simplicity.

"Mine! Ha! ha! ha! What makes you think that?"—looking up in his face. "What, Father Peter! Holy Saint Bridget, yes, and pig-driving too. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Hush, don't laugh so loud."

"What brought you here? Some mischief I have no doubt."

"Whisper," said Father Peter.

"Well?" said Nedha, bending towards him.

Father Peter opened his arms, like a bear, brought his hairy muzzle into contact with her cherry lips, and pressed and hugged till Nedha, who became as frightened, and fierce as a kitten in the arms of an amorous monkey, scratched, and sputtered, and spit, and cried, "Let me go, you filthy brute; let me go, I say, or I'll scream."

"Now, Father Peter, said she, after escaping from his embrace and arranging her ruffled feathers, if we are to be friends, you must never take such a liberty with me again. I want to know what brought you here?"

"I brought a letter for the Princess of Brefney."

"Who gave you the letter? Let me see it."

"His Grace the Bishop of Glendalough."

"Now are you sure? Remember, you cannot serve two masters."

This was a dogma which Killpatrick mentally denied, but he replied, "I know that: the letter is from the bishop."

"And not from the king?"

"What king?"

" Diarmaid, King of Leinster."

" No."

" Give me the letter."

He hands it to her.

She examines it with curious interest, turns it upside down, peeps through this open corner, then that, and exclaims, "The Virgin protect us, to think that *this can speak!* Learning is a wonderful thing, Father Peter! Can *you* write?"

" No.—God forbid!"

" The Princess of Brefney can both read and write: so, they say, can the King of Leinster. They learned the mystery from the same master, Maurice Regan, an ollav in penmanship and poetry. My mistress will read this as fast as I can say my paternosters. Wait here and I will bring you her reply."

" There is no reply," said Father Peter, walking off.

CHAPTER XLVI.

NEDHA SPEAKS THE TRUTH.

" Nedha," said Dearforgil, with a deep sigh, " my confessor is to be here this evening."

" Did you not confess yesterday?"

" I did, but he saw me faint, and thinks——and thinks, perhaps——"

" Thinks what?"

" That I still love Diarmaid; and that I am not fit to take the veil."

" Neither are you."

" This from *you*, Nedha."

"After what occurred to-day, you surely cannot deny that you still love the King of Leinster. You grew scarlet as you passed the pillar. You may deceive the Bishop of Glendalough, or deceive yourself, but you cannot deceive me. It is not so easy to forget the love of such a man as Diarmaid MacMorrough, as you imagine."

"O cease, I beseech you."

"But am I not speaking the truth?"

You are speaking the truth, Néhda, whatever your mistress may say to the contrary. There is a love, which we can never forget, or extinguish. The wronged, despised, and broken-hearted, who flee to the altar for refuge, *may* forget and forgive those who wrong them. Religion, here, may fill the place of love. A purer flame may warm the heart in which human love has been quenched and trampled out. The one may arise out of the other, like the fabled phoenix, from the ashes of its predecessor. The poor bird which "lay among the pots," with battered breast and soiled plumage, may arise with "the wings of a dove, and her feathers of yellow gold." But this was not the case with Dearforgil. Her love *was returned*. She was violently torn from the bosom of the man who adored her, and as a *dernier resort*, sought the refuge of a nun's cell. How, we ask, could *she* forget *him*?

But she was determined to make the sacrifice, and, therefore, began the preparations for the fearful ceremonies of the morrow. Fearful ceremonies indeed! for a professed nun must shave her head, array herself in the cerements of the dead, and *lay* her down on her bier, while the officiating priest reads the funeral service over her. It is a stout and stoical heart that does not palpitate as the clay falls upon it, with a "*Dust to dust, ashes to ashes.*" From such a death, "*Good Lord deliver us!*" It is worse than being buried alive.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DEARFORGIL'S EYES AND HAIR.

I am not sure that I have attempted any minute description of the heroine of this tale ; nor do I intend to attempt it here, for who could paint an angel in petticoats ? But I may give the colour of her hair and eyes.

Her hair ! To what shall I compare it ? It was auburn :

“The lilies of the land lost lustre in her hair.”

Her eyes were large, and dark, and had a golden hue ; a combination of colours seldom met with ; but one which imparts a sort of divine radiance, and extraordinary fascination to a face, possessing the other attributes of female loveliness ; and, she was pre-eminently, *la plus belle des belles*. A blue eye (and a beautiful eye it is) is almost the invariable accompaniment of auburn hair. But dark hazel orbs, and golden hair !—Hold, I grow giddy ! Spenser, in his Epithalamium, describes his bride—in his estimation the most beautiful woman in the world—(and now, I think of it, she was an Irishwoman—Hurrah !)—thus

“ Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,
Sprinkled with pearl, and pearly flowers between,
Doe, lyke a golden mantle, her attyre.”

“ If a woman have long hair,” says the apostle, “ it is her glory, for her hair is given her for a veil.” We know no greater sacrifice that any woman can make, than to shave her head. Like Sampson, her power is in her hair, for what man could fall in love with a woman with a bald head, or shaven crown. It is cruel, it is barbarous, of churchmen, to require nuns to make

this sacrifice. But, I suppose, they feel, that a number of beautiful women, such as is congregated in a nunnery, would bring the church about their ears, as Sampson did the Assembly-house at Gaza, if they did not keep them closely clipped.

Nedha stood behind Dearforgil's couch, running her rosy fingers through her golden ringlets, now and then dropping a tear, which glistened like a diamond among "golden wyre," as Spenser says. One or two of the crystal globules, fell upon her mistress' neck, and caused her to look up, and ask, "Well, child, what now?"

"I can never do it" said Nedha.

"Do what?"

"I never can."

"Do what, I say?"

"Cut off your hair," replied Nedha, bursting into impassioned tears.

Dearforgil's eyes were not dry; and there was a quivering about the lip, which implied deep sympathy with her affectionate servant; but she smiled it off, as she replied, "Why Nedha, you could not be more distressed, if you were going to cut off my head."

"They might as well," sobbed Nedha, "for what will your head be without your hair? No, I can never do it. I would die first. What would the King of Leinster say, if he saw you without your hair?"

Had Nedha shot an arrow right through her mistress' heart, it could not have produced a deeper pang. For Diarmaid to see her with a shorn head! The thought was actually horrible. She grew crimson, and then pale, at the very idea of such a thing.

But it might, notwithstanding, have effectually cured him of his mad passion, and, for aught she knew, saved his soul.

But she could not afford to save his soul, at the price of her

beautiful hair. Yet, she was about to sacrifice this hair, for her own soul. "Can you understand this, gentle reader?"

"No, not exactly," you reply.

It is easily explained. It is *woman's vanity*. Oh! Woman!

Oh! Man! They have far more vanity than women. There was the man who was prepared to die for the woman he loved; but when she asked him to shave off his whiskers, he broke off the match.

You have given me a Roland for my Oliver. The illustration is an apt one, and I have no doubt true, inasmuch as it first appeared in an American paper; but, with woman, this master-passion is strong even in death. I once saw an old woman fall down stairs. I thought she was killed, for I found her at the foot, rolled up like a ball, with her petticoats about her ears. I rushed to the rescue, and began to put her to rights; but the moment I laid my hand on her cap, from beneath which the blood was flowing copiously, she started into life, clapped her hand on the top of her head, and cried, "*Don't touch that.*"

"I beg a thousand pardons, madam; I only wished to look—"

"Then don't look."

I retired, with a low bow, and soliloquised, "*That woman wears a wig.*"

"Diarmaid shall never see me again," mused Dearforgil, with a sigh. "Henceforth I am dead to the world, and the world to me. But, hark! Nedha, some one approaches. It must be my confessor. Do you retire?"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CONFESSION.

We are told by the learned historian, Mosheim, that private confession was practised as early as the fifth century. "Among the Latins, grievous offenders, who had before to confess their sins in public, were relieved from this unpleasant duty, for Leo the Great gave them liberty to confess their crimes privately to a priest."* But it was not, as we learn from the same authority, till the thirteenth century, that that which was granted to some, as a concession, or privilege, was enjoined as a duty on all, both young and old. "In the fourth, and very full Council of Lateran, A.D. 1215, Innocent III., a most imperious pontiff, without asking the opinion of any one, ordained, among other things, that it be held as an article of faith, that every one is bound by a positive divine ordinance, to enumerate, and confess his sins to a priest."

I have quoted the above-mentioned respectable authority, to show that the habit of private confession, was in vogue long before the date of my story, although not made obligatory, by any positive decree of the church, till the beginning of the thirteenth century.

We can imagine a modest woman shrinking from confession, like a timid maiden required to unrobe and bathe for the first time upon the public strand. Even to a male, the command, or requirement, to confess, has about it something of the awful sound of the school-master, who says, "*Strip!*" Nothing can be more imitable than Chateaubriand's description of his first confession:—"The period fixed on, for my first communion,

* Mosheim, part II. chap. 4.

approached. I had, as confessor, the superior of the seminary of the Eudists—a man of fifty years of age, and of a rigid aspect. Every time that I presented myself at the penitential tribunal, he scrutinised me anxiously. Surprised at the slight nature of my faults, he knew not how to reconcile my agitation, with the unimportance of the secrets which I confided to his breast. The nearer Easter-day approached, the more pressing became the father's questions :

“ ‘ Do you conceal nothing from me ? ’ said he.

“ ‘ No, my father,’ I replied.

“ ‘ Have you not committed such, or such a fault ? ’

“ ‘ No, my father,’ and always the same answer, ‘ No, my father.’

“ He dismissed me, doubtfully, sighing, and gazing at me, as if he would read to the bottom of my soul ; whilst I withdrew from his presence, pale and disfigured, like a criminal.

“ I was to receive absolution on Ash-Wednesday. I passed the night between Tuesday and Wednesday in prayer, and in reading with terror, ‘ *The Book of Confessions badly made.* ’

“ On reaching the church, I prostrated myself before the sanctuary, and remained as if annihilated. When I arose to repair to the sacristy, where the superior waited for me, my limbs shook under me. I threw myself at the feet of the priest, and it was only, in an almost unintelligible voice, that I could succeed in pronouncing my confiteor.

“ Well, have you forgotten nothing ? ” said the man of God to me.

“ I remained mute. He once more commenced his questions, and the fatal ‘ No, my father,’ issued from my lips. He seemed to commune with himself; he sought counsel from Him who conferred on the apostles the power of binding and loosing souls. Then, making an effort, he prepared to give me absolution.

"A thunderbolt from heaven would have caused me less terror. I exclaimed :—*'I have not told you all!'*"

Dearforgil's confessor arrived at the time mentioned in the letter, and was admitted by Nedha, who retired as he entered. It was very dark, and the priest's cowl was drawn so closely over the face, that it was impossible to recognise it in the twilight. The bishop placed his back to the window, and waited with patience for his fair penitent, who was kneeling before a *prie d'eau*. It was some time before she could summon sufficient fortitude to rise and approach, and longer still, as she knelt at his feet, before she could summon courage to speak.

"What would you, father?" she at length inquired, trembling.

"Need you ask?" was the brief reply.

"Alas no, I have sinned. I am unworthy the honor I ambitioned, for I offer to God but divided affections."

"Proceed, my child," said her confessor, in a voice which caused the poor penitent to start—though she knew not why. Who is it that divides thine affections with God?"

"Oh! father, need you, who know all, ask that question?"

"I do ask it."

"Who but Diarmaid, king of Leinster;" and as she pronounced the name, she bent forward upon the knees of the confessor, overcome with shame and contrition.

As she lay there, like a second Magdalene, the confessor threw back his cowl, and whispered in her ear, "*My own Dearforgil.*"

She raised her head, in wonder, and looked into his face. Diarmaid was before her; but what was his astonishment and chagrin, to see her start from him, as from a hooded snake, and take refuge in the farthest corner of the apartment. There she stood, with her hand on her heart, panting and trembling, like a bird under the fascination of a serpent.

"Dearforgil," said Diarmaid, recovering somewhat of his pre-

sence of mind, “is it thus you receive me, who have jeopardised life to see and save thee.”

“Jeopardised life to *save* me! Oh! Diarmaid, flee, flee, I beseech thee, for thou would’st destroy me, soul and body.”

“I depart not without thee, Dearforgil,” replied the monarch, almost sternly. “I now know your heart, and swear by heaven and hell, you shall never take this veil.”

“Diarmaid, it was cruel to assume the disguise of a holy priest to read my heart.”

“I needed not to do so: I knew it before; but had I doubted your affection, my doubts had been removed yesterday.”

“What mean you?”

“Why blushed you, as you passed me in the church?”

“Diarmaid, I remembered my sins, and blushed for shame.”

“Dearforgil, you deceive yourself: you fainted at the altar.”

“O! Diarmaid, had you seen——”

“Seen what?”

“The woman of the Cave of the Curse of Tara.”

“What!”—with surprise—“saw you her again?”

“Yes.”

“Where?”

“She stood near you at the pillar, just behind O’Rourke, with whom I saw her speak. It was then I fainted. *See!*—pointing to the window, and starting in terror—“*there she is again!*”

“Where?”

“She passed the window and looked in. O Diarmaid!”

“Come,” exclaimed Diarmaid, seizing her hand.

“*Where?*” was the fierce reply of O’Rourke, bursting into the apartment.

“Clear the way, and let us pass,” exclaimed the King of Leinster, drawing his falchion, and aiming a heavy blow at his antagonist. Their swords flashed fire; they cut, and thrust, and

closed, and wrestled, and rolled on the floor ; O'Rourke beneath, and Diarmaid above. "Then die—as it must be so," said Diarmaid, griping him by the throat with one hand, and drawing his skein with the other. The blade sparkled through the dark chamber.

"You are my prisoner," cried O'Loughlin, arresting his arm. "Arise, O'Rourke, and leave this room. Killpatrick, call the princess' attendants : she has fainted."

Killpatrick's name caused Diarmaid to turn about. He encountered Father Peter, who met his scowl with a broad, malicious, and triumphant laugh.

What did that laugh signify ?

His own success, and Diarmaid's failure.

"We'll meet again, Killpatrick. I know you now. Lead on, O'Loughlin. I'll crush that serpent yet."

"The serpent can crawl, where the lion can't leap," retorted Killpatrick.

"What mean you, villian ?" inquired Diarmaid, glaring on him with eyes of fire.

"Into a queen's —— ; no matter," muttered Killpatrick, gliding off.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE DEATH OF O'LOUGHLIN, AND THE CONSEQUENCES TO DIARMAID.

The king of Leinster had no cause to regret having fallen into the hands of O'Loughlin, one of the bravest and noblest of Irish kings that ever swayed a sceptre, or swung a battle-axe. The

monarch accompanied him to Leinster, where Diarmaid gave him hostages, and cemented a permanent friendship, acknowledging him as supreme monarch. O'Loughlin showed his sense of this favor, by accompanying his friend to Ossory and Leix, where they burned up all before them, compelling the O'Moores—the queen's kindred—and Killpatrick, her paramour, to seek protection in the kingdom of Connaught, at the other side of the Shannon. The circumstance is thus briefly recorded in the Annals of Ireland. A.D. 1157. (*i. e.* the year of the synod at Mellifont.) An army was led by O'Loughlin, accompanied by the people of the North of Ireland, into Leinster; and the king of Leinster, MacMurchadha, gave him hostages. *The people of Leix and of Ossory then fled into Connaught.*"*

In order to meet or counterbalance this union of strength, between O'Loughlin, the king of Ulster, and Diarmaid, king of Leinster, we find "There was a pacific meeting between Roderick O'Conor and Tiernan O'Rourke; and they made peace, and took mutual oaths to support each other, before surties and relias. Tiernan O'Rourke, and the men of Brefney, then turned against O'Loughlin, and joined the standard of Connaught, and a wicker bridge was made at Athlone, by Roderick O'Conor, for the purpose of making incursions into Meath." There was here a battle, in which the "royal heir of Connaught was wounded (by the king of Meath, who was the friend of O'Loughlin), and died of his wounds, at the end of a week." But nothing discouraged by the battle for the wicker bridge, at Athlone, O'Conor united his forces with those of Brefney, and a battalion of Thomond's horse, and entered Meath, where they were encountered by O'Loughlin: "A battle was fought in which the Connachtmen, amounting in all to six large battalions, were defeated, and two other battalions were

* Vide Four Masters, Vol. I. p. 1125.—Dr. O'Donovan's edition.

dreadfully slaughtered.”* Then follows a long list of the “nobility, and commonalty along with them,” that fell on that occasion.

We learn from the Annals of the same year, that O’Loughlin entered Meath, to expel O’Rourke from that part from which he was before driven, when the kingdom of Meath was divided between the father and brother of Dearforgil; but O’Rourke “made peace with the conqueror, so that his own land was left to him.”

It was at this time, A.D. 1159, that O’Loughlin united with Diarmaid in expelling the son of MacFhealain from Leinster, who had been established there by O’Conor and O’Rourke.

The next year, A.D. 1160, we find the following entry:—“There was a pacific meeting between O’Conor and O’Loughlin, and they separated from each other without concluding a peace, or armistice. And again, “An army was led by O’Loughlin, for the purpose of taking the hostages of the men of Meath and Brefney, and an army was led by O’Conor to relieve O’Rourke, &c. But God separated them, without battle, or conflict, without peace, without armistice.”

No words of mine could give the reader a more correct view of the state of affairs at this period, than the passages I have quoted. This struggle for the supremacy continued to the death of O’Loughlin, (the faithful and trusty friend of our hero,) who was overpowered and slain by some Brefney battalions, and other forces friendly to O’Conor, at Lethi-cam. The death of this brave monarch is thus recorded:—“A fierce and merciless battle was fought between them, with the loss of Murtough O’Loughlin, monarch of Ireland, the chief lamp of the valour, chivalry, hospitality and prowess of the west of the world; in his time, a

* Four Masters, A.D. 1159.

man who had never been defeated in battle, or conflict, till that time, and who had joined many battles :—

“Lethi-cam : Great heroes shall perish there ;
They shall be caught at Leitrim Luin,
Though far, though late, though slow.”—Four Masters, A.D. 1156.

CHAPTER L.

THE BURNING OF FERNA,—THE KING IN THE CAVE.

Diarmaid MacMorrough had no mercy to expect (after the death of his friend O'Loughlin,) from O'Conor and O'Rourke. Each had a long account to settle, and hastened to discharge it. The Prince of Brefney sought his *eric* for the abduction of his wife, and the King of Connaught vengeance for the Irish crown, or sovereignty.

Diarmaid was not unprepared. He knew the ruthless foes with whom he had to deal. What did he ? He burned the city of Ferns to the ground, and left nothing standing but his strong castle.* The Russians were not, therefore, the first who set the example of burning down their own cities. “Fearna,” in this respect, takes the precedence of Moscow.

The devastating armies of Connaught and Brefney, notwithstanding, approached, taking hostages of all who submitted to their sway, and making prey of all who opposed them. Having conquered Leinster, they advanced upon the capital, Ferns ; and finding nothing but the castle standing, razed it to the ground,

* “Fearna was burned by MacMurchadha, for fear that the Connaughtmen would burn his castle and house.”—Four Masters, A.D. 1156.

and pronounced a decree of banishment against the king, forbidding any one, on pain of death, to hide or harbour him.*

It is a dangerous thing to drive a man to desperation. Rome was taught this in the case of Coriolanus,—Ireland in the case of Diarmaid.

Diarmaid lay for some months concealed in a cave, on the eastern coast. Here he brooded over his misfortunes, and matured his vengeance. Yes, we say vengeance. *It* was first thought of. It was the only passion which, for a season, burnt darkly within his bosom. But, by and bye light appeared to rise midst the darkness, and that which was first revenge, became ambition.

“O’Davarán,” said the king, turning to the brehon, who followed him, “we have oftentimes spoken of the English conquest, by William the Norman; and I never could see with thee that it was a blessing rather than a curse to England——”

“Hard for you, my Lord.”

“Hush, Maurice Regan, and hear me out before you speak. I never could understand, *until now*, the force of your words”—looking at the brehon—“that the kings of Ireland have been its curse; that Ireland would never prosper till one arose who was able to put all the rest down, and rule them with an iron hand.”

“The very thing Roderick O’Conor is trying to do, my Lord.”

This application of the king’s remark, caused him to cast an indignant scowl on his favorite servant, Maurice Regan, while he replied, “Roderick O’Conor can never do *that*, nor any other Irish king, *unaided by a foreign force*.”

The last words caused both brehon and ollav to look up in surprise.

* A.D. 1156. Diarmaid MacMurchadha was banished over sea, and his castle at Fearna was demolished, and they set up as king, Murchadh, the grandson of Murchadh, i.e. Diarmaid’s nephew.—Four Masters.

"And would you think of introducing a foreign force into this country?"

"I have thought of it, and *more* than thought; I have resolved, God aiding me, to do so."

The brehon sighed.

"But call not those 'foes,' whose conquests produce lasting peace. Has not this been the case with England? Have you not often deplored there was no one strong enough to govern this land? Have you not often said, that one tyrant was better than ten or a hundred; and if we are to be butchered and burned, what does it signify whether a foreigner do it, or we ourselves?"

"Faith the king has you there, Shaun," broke in Regan.

"The Danes are foreigners," replied the brehon.

"Faith that's true, Shaun; you have his High——hem."

"The Danes are pedlars," said Diarmaid. "Their object is merchandise, not conquest: they have no ambition, like the Norman barons, to win and rule kingdoms. To a kingdom at peace, and governed by a strong arm, they would prove useful auxiliaries; at present they are no more than port-pirates. They wage small wars and carry off prey, like our petty chiefs. Would that Ireland had met a stronger foe at an earlier period; but it is not too late"—starting to his feet, and pacing the cave.

"What does your Majesty purpose?"

"To leave this cave, and seek a force that will enable me to win back my kingdom. This is my first move."

"Where hope you to find that force?"

"In Wales, for which I sail this night. The name of *Mael-na-mbo* is not unknown in Wales."

"Not it faith. Your great-great-great grandfather, Mael-na-mbo, was king of Ireland, Wales, and Dublin."

"You accompany me, Maurice."

Maurice was delighted.

"And to you, O'Davaran, I commit the care of the princess Eva, who now stays at the monastery of Ferna, where, if successful, I hope soon to join you. Farewell."

CHAPTER LI.

DARKY FORTY.

We have no details to communicate of the king's journey to Wales. The only circumstance worthy of notice is the interview between Maurice Regan and Merlin, the Welch enchanter, who foretold the destruction of Ireland; and not only so, but predicted that a Norman knight, bearing the cognomen of Darky Forty, should wound the heart of the Princess of Leinster.

Maurice, who appeared deeply affected with this intelligence, forthwith repeated the prediction to the king, telling him to have nothing whatever to say to Norman knights, for that there was a prophecy that one "*Darky Forty*" was to shoot an arrow through Eva's heart.

"Darky Forty," repeated Diarmaid, "I know no Norman knight of that name: there is the Earl of Pembroke, called *De-arcu-forti*, or Strongbow: it must be he. But, if report be true, he is a noble knight. Fear not, Maurice; some of these predictions admit of unforeseen interpretations. The weapons pointed by chivalrous knights against the hearts of princesses are noble warlike deeds. Would that I could meet that knight; but it is now too late, for the troops of MacRees Ap-Griffith,* sail to Ireland, to-morrow."

* "That is of the King of Wales. He was probably the son of Rees Ap-Griffith."—Dr. O'Donovan's Notes, Vol. I. p. 1166.

The result of this expedition is given in the Annals of Ireland in the following brief manner:—"A.D. 1167. Diarmaid Mac Murrough returned from England with a force of Galls [*i.e. the Welch*] and took the kingdom of Leinster. Another army was led by Roderick O'Conor, and Tiernan O'Rourke, into Leinster. A battle was fought between some of the recruits and cavalry of Connaught, and the cavalry of Leinster; and six of the Connaughtmen were slain, in the first charge. In the second, led on by Tiernan O'Rourke, twenty-five Leinster men were slain, together with the son of the king of Britain."

The small force of Diarmaid was, on this occasion, completely defeated, he compelled to give hostages to O'Conor (obtaining in return, ten cantreds of his own native territory,) a hundred ounces of gold, to Tiernan O'Rourke, for his *eineach*, or for the abduction of Dearforgil.*

CHAPTER LII.

THE PROPHECY OF MERLIN.

We must now follow the fortunes of our hero to Ferns, or Fearna, where he was apportioned the "ten cantreds of his own native territory." This would more than have satisfied the am-

* It is probable that Dearforgil had, at this time, retired to a cloister. Whether she heard, in the quietness of her cell, the clash of warlike arms, and the misfortunes of her lover, we cannot say, but we find, in the Irish Annals, immediately after the account of Diarmaid's defeat, the following entry:—"The church of the nuns of Clonmacnoise was finished by Dearforgil." Was this as atonement, or penance, for some burst of sympathetic sorrow with her defeated Diarmaid? I merely throw out the hint. "The church makes penitents pay dearly for such tears. "The ruins of the church [which she built] are still extant, and in tolerable preservation at Clonmacnoise."—Dr. O'Donovan's note to Four Masters, Vol. I. p. 1166.

bition of Regulus, or Cincinatus. It was no more to Diarmaid than Elba was to Napoleon Buonaparte.*

But it gave him a footing in the soil, from which he had been banished: it was a fulcrum within, and not without the world he wished to move. The lever might reach to England, or even Italy (as it did), but the fulcrum must be *within* the soil. No country can be effectually conquered, without the aid of an enemy, or traitor in its own camp. There are poetical illustrations which would cap this last remark, hovering about my mind, and above my head, but I shall not venture further in pursuit of them, for I find myself, at this moment, standing on the very margin of a vast Irish bog, called, by some, "REPEAL," and by others "*Humbug*." Another step might take me above the knees. Let those who like wild duck, shoot for themselves. I shall return to the hero of my tale.

For those ten cantrids (or thousand manors) and the privilege of residing in Ireland, the King of Leinster had to give O'Conor seven hostages. Two of these were Diarmaid's own sons, Conchabar, the heir apparent to the throne, and Enna, who had been blinded by Killpatrick. Any attempt to break the compact of peace, and subjection to the conqueror, would jeopardise the lives of these young men, whom O'Conor held in safe keeping, in Connaught. The apple rested on the head of Conchabar. Would Diarmaid dare to draw the bow? We shall see.

"You must tell the princess, Maurice," said the king, addressing the ollav, who accompanied him back to a monastery near Ferns, (for the royal palace was at this time a ruin) "you must tell the princess, of Merlin the enchanter's prophecy."

"What is it, Maurice?" inquired Eva, looking up from her tapestry, upon which she was weaving, or working, an English

* *A cantrid*:—"A cantre, in the British language, signifieth a hundred."—Johnson and Cowel. But a hundred what? A hundred manors, it is supposed.

crusading knight, in fierce contest with a Saracen, for the possession of the Holy Sepulchre.

"Why, my lady, he predicted that Ulster should be conquered by a Norman knight, riding a white horse, and bearing birds on his shield."*

"Not that, Maurice; the prophecy about *Darky*. Tell the princess that."

"Maurice Regan hemmed two or three times, and then boldly related the prediction.

The prophecy produced a blush, instead of a palor, on the cheek of Eva. Women are not half so much afraid of warriors, or men with red coats, as we imagine.

"Eva, I think I heard you say, some years ago, you would wish to marry a Norman knight," said the king, somewhat bluntly.

This home thrust sent the rich blood, in a moment, to the forehead of the Princess of Leinster. "Oh! Sir, I was only a child then," was her hasty reply.

"Well, I should like to know how you feel on this subject, now that you are no longer a child. Perhaps you have changed your mind, and should prefer an Irish prince—that is, provided you can get one? What think you of one of the sons of my friend, Roderick O'Conor, king of Connaught, Leinster, Meath, Ulster, Munster, and all Ireland?"

"Father, why speak so to me. How could I ever marry son of the man who drove you from your throne, and compels you to hide your head beneath these walls?"

"Would you, then, if you could, restore me to my throne and kingdom?"

* Holinshed says that John de Courcy rode a white horse, and had three eagles painted on his standard, *in order to fulfil* the prophecy of Merlin, the Welch enchanter.

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“ O need you ask me that?”

“ I do ask you, Eva.”

“ Would I had the power.”

“ You would use it?”

“ Yes.”

“ Though you were compelled to marry a Norman knight—say, like the knight thou hast wrought upon that canvass?”

Eva hung down her head, and by and bye rose, and left the apartment.

“ Your Majesty,” said the brehon, the just judge of Leinster, (who in matters of great importance was as brave as a lion, or as brave as Daniel in the lion’s den, and who sat silent during the conversation, pondering deeply the import of the king’s words,) “your Majesty,” he at length broke in, “will excuse me—”

“ Anything but a want of confidence, and plain speaking, O’Davaran,” replied the king, with prompt cordiality; for it was his object to draw out his old friend, before engaging in any matter of moment.

“ What mean you by the question you have just put to the princess?”

“ Her hand, O’Davaran, is the only guerdon left me, with which to reward the knight, who enables me to win back my kingdom.”

“ And does your Majesty think of making such an attempt?”

“ I not only think, but have decided on doing it.”

“ Let me pray you to hesitate. Bethink you, my Lord, that your two children, and five of the princes of Leinster, are in the hands of O’Conor, a violent and vindictive prince.”

I have thought of it, O’Davaran. It has been it which caused me to hesitate, for months; and while I delay, what is the consequence? That they *remain* in his hands, prisoners. My success alone gives them a hope of escape.”

"But suppose you fail?"

"They remain where they are."

"*Perhaps not*"—with an ominous shake of the head.

"What? Would he slay them? He surely would not lay violent hands on Enna. He would not be base enough to murder a blind boy. *He* can interfere no more with his ambitious projects, or those of any one else.

"But he might slay the heir-apparent to your throne."

"I know it," said the king: I have thought of that also; and as he spoke a dark cloud collected round his brow. By and bye he fell into one of his deep fits of abstraction, during which he sometimes spoke aloud:—"Conchabar, I know not whether thou be son of mine, or not. Thy mother—would that I could unravel the history of that dark night! Dark indeed to thee my noble boy. O Enna——"

The brehon feeling it would be as idle to attempt to arrest the whirlwind, or stem a mountain torrent, as to argue with the king during one of these paroxysms of passion, rose, and left Diarmuid alone with Maurice Regan.

The brehon's retreating footsteps aroused the monarch from his reverie. He looked up and asked, "Is he gone? Let him go. Those over-wise and prudent men are unfitted for great occasions. Nothing venture, never win. You must accompany me to England again"—turning to the ollav.

"To *England*, my Lord Righ?"

"Yes, to England. I go this time to the fountain head, to Henry. The English kings have looked long with greedy eyes on this green isle, and if Henry help me to win it from O'Conor, I shall do him fealty for the Irish crown. What say you, Regan?"

"Bravo!" said Regan; "I'd sooner the devil himself ruled the country, than Roderick O'Conor."

"I see you understand me better than O'Davarán; and if I succeed, you shall write the history of my conquest."*

"Succeed! Who could beat us, if we have the Normans at our back. When does your Majesty leave Ferns for England?"

"To-night we pass in disguise to England, for I would not that O'Conor should know I had left the kingdom, till I return to wrest it from his hands."

CHAPTER LIII.

HENRY II. KING OF ENGLAND—HIS MISSIONARY ZEAL.

Henry II. of England, had long anticipated his Irish ally, Diarmaid, King of Leinster, in conceiving the idea of the conquest of Ireland, and only waited a favorable opportunity. This prince was possessed of unbounded ambition, and was often heard to say, that "the government of the whole world was hardly sufficient for a great man." But he was wise and politic, and restrained his ambition within the boundaries of things probable, and never ventured on what was merely possible.

Henry was eloquent, affable, facetious, and false. No one who knew him well would believe his words, or rely on his promises. He justified his want of veracity and decision by the very able aphorism, "*It is better to repent of words than deeds.*" But his want of decision was generally nothing more than a waiting his opportunity. He did not consider it wise, as Oliver Cromwell would say, "to outrun providence." He waited for God to open the door for the conquest of Ireland.

* Something like this was done by one *Maurice Regan*, the secretary and historian, or ollav in penmanship, to Diarmaid MacMurrough, king of Leinster.

"Who would have thought," said Henry, addressing John of Salisbury, the learned monk, whom he sent as an envoy to Pope Adrian IV., to get his sanction for the subjugation of Ireland, "who would have thought," said the king, "that our countryman, Nicholas Breakspear, the son of Robert Chambers, would ever sit upon the papal throne."

"It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

"Truly marvellous," said the king, in the same pious strain:

- "He exalteth them of low degree. Nicholas Breakspear was, if I remember right, an old and particular friend of thine?"

"He was, and I hope still is, your Majesty. He loved me once with more tender affection than he loved his own mother or brother, and revealed to me his inmost thoughts;* nor do I think he is the man to forget an old friend, for I believe him to be among the few whom prosperity could not spoil."

"I am delighted, for your sake, to hear it. Could you persuade him, think you, that is, provided the see of Chartres were vacant, to appoint a mutual friend of his, and mine, to the empty stall." The king looked slyly at the monk—"we shall not mention names—but I have my eye on a learned, and pious monk, who does not live a hundred miles from Salisbury, whom I greatly desire to honor."

The modest monk hung his head.

"You are silent. Well, we shall leave the consideration of this affair for some future occasion; *you* might feel some delicacy in mentioning the name of the good priest

* John of Salisbury, who was afterwards Bishop of Chartres, in one of his works, published just after Adrian's death, after describing the intimate friendship which subsisted between him and His Holiness, says, "Pope Adrian had a mother and brother of his own: he loved me with more tender affection than he did them: he used to confess, both in public and private, that he valued me beyond all men: such an opinion had he formed of me that he would take pleasure in unburdening his conscience, in my presence, when the occasion presented itself."

I refer to, as a fit subject for promotion; you may, therefore, leave this in my hands; but I shall require you to visit Rome, on a matter of more vital importance. "Oh!" with a deep sigh—"my soul is grieved, and my bowels yearn within me"—laying his hand on his protuberant paunch—"to think of the wild, uncultivated, and unchristian condition of those barbarian inhabitants of Ireland, who know no more of religion than the brute beasts. You must join with me in bringing those beastly barbarians into the fold of Christ, and under the paternal government of our friend and father, Adrian IV.

"Beastly barbarians, indeed," replied the monk—"they pay neither tithe nor first-fruits."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the king.

"Nor go to confession."

The king turned up the whites of his eyes.

"No Irish priest dare impose penance, for no one would submit to it"

"Awful! awful!"

"And as for lawful wedlock, they make no account of it."

"Fearful state of immorality indeed," said Henry, starting up in haste, for the dark eye of the monk was, at that moment, fixed upon his own face. "But," continued he, resuming his seat, after pacing the parlour, "let me speak with you on the best mode of bringing them to a proper state of subjection to the church. For this object, I intend sending you, as envoy, to Rome, to gain for me the sanction of the Holy Father, for the conquest of Ireland; for to expect their conversion, before we have brought them under the yoke of good government, would be as irrational as to put a wild colt to the queen's carriage before it had been broken in, and made to draw, under the heavy wain. Conquer first, and Christianise afterwards.—Eh?"

"Your Majesty speaks like Solomon."

"You agree with me, then?"

"I do Sir, my Lord."

"I am happy to hear it"—rising, and pacing the room. "They talk of a crusade to the Holy land! What more worthy object of ambition than the conversion, or, I should rather say, re-conversion, or reformation of a country, the piety and learning of whose inhabitants once won for it the appellation of the Land of Saints. Christian charity and enterprise should begin at home. Should it not?"

"Undoubtedly, my Lord."

"We are divinely commanded to preach the gospel; and begin at Jerusalem. Are not these the words?"

"Undoubtedly, my Lord. Your Highness speaks like an oracle."

"Does not Ireland lie at our side, like a sister?"

"Like a sister, as your Highness says."

"And should we not love her as such?"

"We are commanded to do so."

"Just so," said the king, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "Well, I expect you will do your utmost to further my object—to further this good work, I should say, at Rome. I depend on your loyalty, as a Briton; and on your zeal as a Christian, to win for me the sanction of your friend, Nicholas Breakspear, or I should say, the Holy Father Adrian, the Pope. With his blessing on our enterprise, we cannot fail of success. Nor shall I, in the mean time, lose sight of the interests of the Salisbury monk, of whom I before spoke."

"There is time enough for that, my Lord Sir. When shall I wait on your Highness for my credentials and papers?"

"Let me see: this is Thursday. On next Tuesday week all will be ready; so now go and prepare for your journey. Pax vobis."

CHAPTER LIV.

JOHN OF SALISBURY AND NICHOLAS BREAKSPEAR.

John of Salisbury arrived at Rome, without meeting any incident worthy of record, where he received a warm welcome from his old and trusty friend, Nicholas Breakspear, alias, Adrian IV. John resided, during his stay, at the Pope's palace, and dined and supped with His Holiness, dipping his fingers in the same dish.

“Come, John, and sit here: there is room for us both. It is not the first time we have eaten out of one platter, and that nothing but lentals. Throw your bones into that bowl”—pointing to a large silver bowl, which stood on the table before them—“you need not trouble yourself picking them too close: they are for the poor.”

“The nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat, if your Highness or Holiness remembers the English proverb,’ replied John.

My Holiness or Highness remembers no such thing, but Nicholas Breakspear, the son of the poor clerk, Robert Chambers, remembers it right well; for there was a time, when he seldom got even a bone to pick. But John, I request, that when we are alone, you will call me nothing but Nicholas, or what you called me when a boy, “Nick;” but I am *Old Nick*,* now,”

* *Old Nick*. It is thought by some that the devil was named Nick, or *Nick-named* after the famous Florentine political writer, Machiavelli. For this we have, at least, the authority of Butler.—*Hudibras, pt. III. canto 1.*

“Nick Machiavelli had ne'er a trick,

· Tho' he gave his name to our Old Nick.”

This derivation, which implies the great anomaly of naming the father after the child, can only be reconciled on one supposition, namely, that the parent was an antipedobaptist.

laughing heartily at his *mot*. “ We never met since I left St. Albans.”

“ Never,” replied the monk.

“ They dismissed me from St. Alban’s, you remember, for incapacity.”

“ I remember it right well. I can never forget it, nor forgive it.”

“ Well, after leaving St. Albans, I travelled as a mendicant, to Paris, where I made no long stay ; and wandered from that to Provence, where I was admitted among the Regular Canons of Saint Rufus ; and in course of time became the abbot. I had not long attained to this honor, before a conspiracy broke out amongst the brethren against me. I believe they disliked me, or were jealous of me, as an Englishman. At any rate they laid an accusation against me before the Holy Father, Eugenius, praying that I might be dismissed. I had to go to Rome, and meet my accusers, face to face, like the Apostle of the Gentiles. When both parties had been fully heard, the Pope pronounced his decision, in these words :—

“ ‘ I grant the prayer of your petition, the Abbot of St. Rufus is dismissed.’

“ They looked delighted, and were going to express their gratitude by falling on their knees before him, when he proceeded thus :—

“ ‘ Go elect another abbot. *The Englishman is Cardinal Bishop of Albano!*’

“ Had they been struck with heaven’s lightning, they could not have been more paralysed.”

Tears of sympathetic joy trickled down the cheeks of John of Salisbury, as he listened :—“ Thank God,” he exclaimed. “ How mysterious are his ways. ‘ He makes the wrath of man to praise him.’ Well, the Provencials may have been jealous of you ; but,

in England, your exaltation to the papal chair, was hailed with transports of joy."

"I know it, I know it," said the Pope, "and by none more so than by my old friend"—taking his hand—"John of Salisbury. But you would speak of your mission. I promised to hear you to-day. But help yourself: this wine is good. Let me set you a good example"—filling his own goblet. "Here is to the success of your mission with Pope Adrian IV."—smiling, nodding, and drinking. "We are at your service, now, John."

"His Highness, the King of England, feels deeply," said the monk, with a little awkward hesitation. "His Highness feels for the spiritual condition of the wild Irish; and prays your Holiness to sanction his efforts to draw them within the fold."

The Pope smiled at the idea of Henry's zeal, and replied, "Why, John, I thought the Irish were a pious, tractable race of men, who had been gathered into the fold many centuries ago."

"*Pious! and tractable!*" exclaimed John of Salisbury, with surprise.

"Yes. What is this William of Malmesbury says of them: 'The Irish are an innocent people, of genuine simplicity, who never thought of contriving mischief.'"

"*Innocent! simple! who never thought of contriving mischief!* Why, God help your foolish head. Oh! I humbly beg your Reverence—your Holiness' pardon. I mean—"

"Go on, John, go on. 'God help your foolish head.'—Ha! ha! ha! John, I have not another friend in Christendom, that would tell me so much to my face. No one else would have the courage, or faithfulness, to tell me I had a foolish head; but it's true, John—quite true. What is the Pope more than any other poor sinner. There was Peter himself, who said, and did, some foolish things. Well, go on about the Irish—you don't hold

them for the lambs that William of Malmsbury would make us believe. *Your foolish head! Ha! ha! ha!*"

"*Lambs!* they are wolves, tigers, devils, that will soon destroy themselves, if they are not subjugated, and brought under good government. They have no respect for laws, human or divine. Has your Holiness read the life of Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh, by Bernard, Abbot of Clairval.*—two men whose names deserve to be canonised!"

"I believe so, John. I have not read the book, but it is in the Vatican Library. I shall send for it"—he sends—"In fact, I have no time for reading new books. I now can do no more than chew the cud of my former studies. We make great sacrifices in rising to high places. The cares of the church, and public matters, consume the whole of my time. It is a treat to spend a day or two with you, John, and talk over early scenes; but, for this, I had to tear myself away; but here is the book"—handing it to his friend.

John of Salisbury takes the manuscript, casts his eye over it, and says, "Mark here the very commencement:—'Our friend Malachy, born in Ireland, among the barbarous people of that land, was there brought up, and there received his education. But from the barbarian soil that gave him birth, he derived no more of his nature, than the fishes of the sea derive from their native brine. How delightful to think that a wild and barbarous land should have given birth to one so worthy, a fellow-citizen of the saints and of the household of God! He that can bring forth honey out of the rock, and oil from the flinty stone, it was He who brought this to pass.'"[†]

"That is not very complimentary to begin with—well, proceed."

John of Salisbury continues to read:—"About the thirtieth

* The book was published about 1150. † Vit. Mal. cap. 1.

year of his age, Malachy having been consecrated bishop, is introduced to Connor, for this was the name of the town. But as soon as he had commenced acting in his new office, then it was that this man of God knew that it was not men, but beasts, he had to deal with. Nowhere yet had he met with the like, in the most savage place; nowhere had he found people so profligate in their morals, so ungodly in their faith, barbarous as to their laws, stiff-necked against discipline, filthy in their lives: Christians in name, in reality Pagans. They did not pay tithes; nor first-fruits, nor keep lawful wedlock, nor go to confession; absolutely there could not be found one either to impose a penance, or submit to it. There were very few ministers of the altar. But, to be sure, what need of more, when even those few were almost entirely idle, without anything to do among the laity? They had no opportunity of gaining the fruit of their services among such a profligate people. No voice of preacher or chanter was heard in the churches. What, then, was the soldier of the Lord to do? He must either retreat in disgrace, or else engage in a perilous combat."

" Proceed."

" About this time it came to pass, that the primate Celsus fell sick, and knowing that his end was near, he made a sort of will, by which Malachy was appointed for his successor, as no one else appeared to be more worthy of filling the principal see of Ireland. This appointment Celsus announced to those who were with him, and enjoined upon such as were absent; this he gave in charge, by the authority of St. Patrick, specially to the two kings of Munster, and to the princes of the land.

" A scandalous custom had been introduced by the diabolical ambition of certain of the nobles, that the Holy See [*i.e.* Armagh] should be obtained by hereditary succession. For they allowed no one to be promoted to the bishopric, unless such as were of

their own tribe and family; nor was it for any short period this execrable succession had continued, as nearly fifteen generations had already passed away in this villiany. And so firmly had this wicked and adulterous generation established their unholy right, (or wrong rather, that deserved to be punished with any sort of death,) that although clergymen of their blood were not to be found among them on some occasions, yet bishops they never were without. In fine, there had been already before the time of Celsus, *eight individuals who were married, and without orders, yet still men of education.* Hence arose all that neglect of church discipline throughout the entire of Ireland, which we have already mentioned; hence that relaxation of censures, and wasting away of religion; hence, too, that wild savage spirit that had stolen into the place of Christian meekness; nay, a sort of Paganism introduced under the Christian name. For (what was unheard of since the very origin of Christianity) with utter disregard of order or cause, bishops were changed at the will of the metropolitan, so that one bishoprick was not content with a single bishop, *but almost every church must have a bishop of its own;* and no wonder, for how could the limbs of so diseased a head be healthy?"

"Yes, this is a matter which touches our authority to the quick," said his Holiness, "but there has been some improvement of late, and we purpose to send a legate to that country, and convene a synod for the improvement of manners, and the establishment of the church's authority."*

* A Synod was convened about this time, at Cashel, over which Christian, the Bishop of Lismore, presided, as the Pope's agent. Among other things, it was enacted, (1) That all the faithful shall pay tithes of cattle, corn, &c. (2) That all church lands shall be entirely free from all exactions of laymen. (3) That in case of homicide, committed by the laity, when they compound with their enemies, for the offence, the clergy, who may be their relatives, shall pay no part of the fine. (4) That all offices of religion shall, for the future, be ordered after the model of the Holy Church, and according to the observances of the English Church.—*Gerald, Camb. part I. cap. 33.*

"Will not this, think you, prove more effective after the subjugation of the country by his Highness, King Henry, of England?"

"It would seem so; but the whole matter shall receive my fullest consideration, and you shall have my decision on the morrow."

The next day Adrian gave his friend a sealed letter for his master, Henry II., known as the famous Bull for the subjugation of Ireland. On the envelope was written, in the Pope's hand, "For our well-beloved son in Christ, The illustrious King of England. This by the hands of our well-beloved brother, John, Bishop-elect of Chartres."

John of Salisbury smiled, and bent to kiss the pontiff's hand.

"Not so, John," replied Nicholas Breakspear, embracing him affectionately; and I pray that you may have grace to discharge the duties of your high office, better than I do those of supreme pontiff. And now, John, before we part I have one request to make of you."

"What is it," said John, whose eye was dim with tears.

"That you will remember me in your prayers."

The following is this famous Bull, but we must present it to the reader in a new chapter.



CHAPTER LV.

THE BULL.

“ADRIAN, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD,
TO OUR WELL-BELOVED SON IN CHRIST, THE ILLUSTRIOS
KING OF THE ENGLISH, HEALTH AND APOSTOLICAL BENE-
DICTION.

“Your Highness contemplates the laudable, and *profitable* work, of gaining a glorious reputation on earth, and enhancing the recompense of future bliss in heaven, by turning your thoughts, in the true spirit of a Catholic prince, to widening the bounds of the Church, and explaining the true Christian faith, *to ignorant and uncivilised tribes, and exterminating the nurseries of vice*, from the heritage of the Lord: and in order to the better execution of this project, you implore the counsel and countenance of the Apostolic See. In which matter, the more mature the deliberation and the greater the discretion with which you proceed, so much greater, we trust, will be the success that will, with the Lord’s permission, attend your exertions.

“Certainly there is no doubt, but that Ireland, and all the islands upon which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, hath shined, and which have received instruction in the Christian faith, *do belong of right to St. Peter, and the Holy Roman Church*, as your Grace also admits. Wherefore we are the more ready to introduce into them a faithful plantation, and a stock acceptable to God, in proportion, as we are convinced, from conscientious motives, that this is urgently required of us.

“You have signified to us, son, well-beloved in Christ, your desire to enter the island of Ireland, in order to bring that

people into subjection to laws, and to exterminate the nurseries of vices from the country; and that you are willing to pay to St. Peter an annual tribute of one penny for every house, and to preserve uninjured, and inviolate, the ecclesiastical rights of that land.

"We, therefore, treating your pious and laudible desire with the favor which it deserves, and graciously acceding to your petition, express our will and pleasure, that in order to widen the bounds of the church, to check the spread of vice, to reform morals and inculcate virtues, in order to the advancement of the Christian religion, you should enter that island, and do what shall tend to the honor of God, and the welfare of that land. And let the people of that land receive you in an honorable manner, and respect you as their Lord; provided always, that ecclesiastical rights be uninjured, and inviolate, and the annual payment of one penny, for every house, be secured to St. Peter, and the Holy Roman Church.

"If, then, you shall think fit to carry out to its execution, the plan which you have conceived in your mind, endeavour diligently to improve that nation by inculcating good morals: and exert yourself, both personally, and by means of such agents as you employ, whom you shall have found suitable to the work for their faith, conversation, and life, that the Church may be adorned there, the religion of the Christian faith be planted and grow, and the things pertaining to the honor of God, and the salvation of souls, be ordered by you, in such a way, that you may deserve to obtain from God a higher degree of reward, in eternity, and succeed in gaining on earth a name glorious throughout all generations."

The Irish Historian, the Abbe MacGeoghegan, is sadly perplexed, or worried, by this Bull. It is as bad as "the cow with the crumpled horn." Indeed he doubts whether it can be a

true Bull at all. "It is *said*, that in this reign, in the year, 1155 Pope Adrian IV. issued the celebrated Bull, by which this pontiff transferred the sovereignty of Ireland to Henry II. king of England. The Bull gains but little authentication from the authority of John of Salisbury (who, he asserts, in another place, had gone to Italy of his own accord, and through curiosity, to visit his countryman Adrian) afterwards Bishop of Chartres, in his treatise '*De Nugis Curialibus*.'" This writer is made to say, at the end of the last chapter of his fourth book, that Pope Adrian had granted Ireland to king Henry, at his request, it being the patrimony of his Holiness, by hereditary right, inasmuch, as all the islands belonged to the Roman Church, by the concession of the Emperor Constantine the Great."

The Abbe calls it "*nonsense*" to say that all islands belong to the Roman Church in right of the grant of Constantine. Let the Abbe beware what he is about. Does he not find in a high church authority that "*Omnes insulae de jure antiquo, ex donatio Constantine, qui eam fundavit, et dotavit dicuntur ad ecclesiam Romanum pertinere.*" And if this did not stand, we are told by Keating, that the Irish princes gave the sovereignty of the island to Urban II. in 1092, so that the Church's right to grant the Island to Henry II. holds good either way. The only argument which seems to have any weight with the good Abbe, in favor of the authenticity of the Bull, is, *that the Pope was an Englishman*, though a Pope; and Henry II. was an Englishman.
A bas les Anglais!

The Abbe is amused, he is perfectly pungent and witty, on the theme of sending the Normans to reform the morals and manners of the Irish. "Such, he says, were the *doctors* whom Henry II. sent to Ireland, by apostolical authority, (as it pretended) to re-establish religion and correct morals. They

must have acquired politeness by inspiration, to have been capable of polishing the manners of others.”*

CHAPTER LVI.

DIARMAID'S INTERVIEW WITH STRONGBOW.

We must now leave the discussions of churchmen, respecting the right of popes, and the justice of kings, to grant and conquer countries, to follow the fortunes of our hero, with whom we parted, as he took his journey for Aquitaine, in France, where Henry II. was then staying.

The case of the King of Leinster was simple enough. He had been dispossessed of his kingdom, and rightful inheritance, by Roderick O'Conor, King of Connaught, whose ambition grasped at the government of the whole of Ireland.

That this was the true state of the case, and that Roderick O'Conor was as ambitious as Henry II. or more so, must be evident to all well read in the history of the period.

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose Diarmaid was expelled the country for his abduction of Dearforgil. This happened sixteen or seventeen years before his expulsion. The true cause was O'Conor's hatred of the man who had supported the claims of his rival O'Loughlin O'Neill, for the sovereignty of

* The Abbe quotes the authority of Giraldus Cambrensis, in favour of the character of the Irish clergy, at this time, and it is only fair and just that we should do the same:—“The clergy of that country,” says he, “are highly to be praised for their religion; and amongst other virtues, with which they are endowed, their chastity forms a peculiar feature. Those who are entrusted with the divine service, do not leave the church, but apply themselves wholly to the reciting of psalms, prayers, and reading. They are extremely temperate in their food, and never eat till towards evening, when their office is ended.”

Ireland. Roderick O'Conor was a cruel and ambitious tyrant. But more on this subject by and bye.

Diarmaid's application for aid, and his proposition of holding his kingdom of Leinster, under Henry, as lord paramount, was highly flattering to the English monarch. But his hands being full of continental affairs, he was unprepared, at that moment, to render him assistance, in the way of troops; but he told him he might go to England, and raise forces there; and that he would send orders to his ministry to forward his enterprise.

Diarmaid had to be satisfied with this reply. He took his leave of the English monarch, embarked for England, visited Bristol, communicating to the magistrates of that ancient city, the orders of their king, who caused them to be published.

One day as the King of Leinster sat in the castle guard-room, absorbed with his own melancholy thoughts—for, notwithstanding Henry's letter of instruction to his council, and its publication by the magistrates of Bristol, recruits came but slowly to his standard—the servant in waiting entered to say, “an English knight wishes to see the King of Leinster.”

“Who is he?” inquired Diarmaid.

“I know not, my Lord. He did not give his name.”

“Let him walk up. I wonder who he can be, Maurice,” said the king. “Could it be your friend, Darky Forty?”

“God forbid!” said Maurice.

While they spoke, the knight entered, with a courteous bow. He was tall and well formed. His complexion was sanguine, his face somewhat freckled, which gave it a feminine appearance, eyes grey, and his voice feeble.

“This can't be *Darky*, at any rate,” soliloquised the ollav.

“The King of Leinster?” said the strange knight, with rather a sad smile.

"The same, at your service; but you have the advantage of me; I have not heard your name or title?"

"Richard Strigul, Earl of Chepstow," was his quiet response.

"And Pembroke," said the king, whose eyes flashed fire—"better known as Richard Strongbow, or Richard *De-arcu-forti*."

"Blood and fire! It's Darky after all." mentally ejaculated Maurice Regan.

"My father, Gilbert de Clare, bore that title," was young Strongbow's modest reply.

"And if report be true, Ulysses' bow is not too heavy for his son."

"Ulysses had no son," replied the knight, with a smile.

"True, but Gilbert de Clare was more fortunate. And may I hope he comes to lend the power of his arm, and the wisdom of his counsel, to our cause?"

"Such was my intent. I would at least learn the nature of the service in which you wish me to engage."

"To restore me to the throne of Leinster."

"A noble object! What force do you require for accomplishing this?"

"The stronger the better. What number of men could you raise?"

"That depends altogether on circumstances."

"What are the circumstances?"

"For the common soldier, you will require money; for knights, a higher reward."

"And what would they require?"

"A portion of the re-conquered country."

The king mused long, before he replied. He thought of the Norman conquest of England. Harold, the last of the Saxon kings, started up from his gory grave, and stood before him, and seemed to reproach him with his premeditated treachery to

his country. "Think of me, and hesitate," he seemed to say. But by and bye, this vision faded from his view, and was succeeded by another. He sees his palace of Ferns, in flames—his daughter, Eva, barely escaping the hands of some ruthless Irish chieftain; amidst the flames, he beholds the triumphant face of Roderick O'Conor; behind which glares out the scarred visage of his revengeful rival, Tiernan O'Rourke, on whose left, crouches or crawls that wily serpent, Donnchadh Killpatrick. Diarmaid started from his reverie, and said, "Make your own terms: the country is wide enough for the whole of us."

"I speak not for myself," replied the young earl, sadly: "I lose nothing in leaving England."

"The Earl of Pembroke nothing to lose!"

"The title is all that the king has left me; and he thinks that of 'Lack-Land' would best suit my fortunes."

"Let Henry give that to one of his sons. Thou art young, and hast a strong arm, and a brave heart: by the aid of these qualifications, knights win fortunes. Thou art also comely, and hast a modest bearing, such as win on ladies hearts. I wonder much how you lost favor in the court of Henry."

"I lost favor by chastising the favorite."

"What! is it Humet?"

"The same."

"How?"

"He gave me the lie, to my face, for which I returned him *un coup au derrière*."

"Ha! ha! ha! good! Well?"

"The king started from his couch, in fury, and called on me to apologise."

"You refused?"

"Positively," replied the earl, with mild decision.

"Well, what next?"

"Henry grew furious. Have you ever seen the king in a passion?"

"Never. He was all smiles and complaisance to me."

"On such occasions he is ungovernable. His eyes become spotted with blood. He called me traitor, kicked off his shoes, dashed his cap on the floor, and then lay down, and gnawed the straw."*

"Go on."

"I offered to pay the proper fine, for my offence—ten sous†—but Henry would not allow Humet to accept them."

"And you left his court in disgrace?"

"Even so."

"But I have heard the king treated you coldly, before this: that he was, in fact, jealous of the favor you won among the ladies of his court."

A modest tinge of pink coloured the cheek of the noble knight, as he replied, "If Henry ever suspected me of aught but honorable bearing, he did me foul injustice."

"So I verily believe; but when ladies fall in love with noble knights, what is to be done?" There is a propheey in Wales: you have heard of it, Maurice—turning to the ollav—"that a knight bearing the title of—"

"Darky," broke in Maurice Regan."

"That a knight bearing the title of *De-arcu-forti* was to wound—"

"Pierce," broke in Maurice.

"Pierce, was it—that a knight bearing the title of De-arcu-forti, was to pierce the heart of an Irish princess?"

"I never heard it," said Strongbow, smiling."

* Lingard describes a scene of this description, in his History of England.

† The Normans, who were a people of precise honor, imposed a penalty of five sous for a tweak of the nose, and ten sous for *un coup au derrière*.

"You have not much curiosity. I begin to fear that Henry has done you great injustice indeed."

"Why so, my Lord?"

"You have not asked the name of the Irish princess."

"I was not aware the lady's name was mentioned in the prophecy. May I inquire?"

"Eva, the Princess of Leinster."

"The Princess of Leinster," exclaimed the earl, in surprise, his eyes sparkling with a strange light. But your Highness," continued he, as the color faded from his cheek, "gives no heed to such idle words."

"I don't know that," said the king, with animation. "I have but two sons, both of whom are hostages in the hands of O'Conor; one Enna, the roydamma, or heir apparent, is blind; and was blinded, I suspect, by the mother of Conchabar, the second son, in order to place her own son on the throne of Leinster. They are both in O'Conor's hands, but should Conchabar escape, I have sworn he shall never sit upon my throne. No; that is reserved for the man who wins the hand of Eva."

"None but a royal prince can hope to win that. I have heard of shooting at stars."

"The man who aids me most, in winning back my kingdom, shall be my son-in-law and heir; and to Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, I make the first tender"—holding out his hand. "Do you accept it?"

"Accept it! Oh! my Lord, you do me too great an honour," bending on his knee to kiss the proffered hand. "How can I win so high a prize?"

"By your good sword," withdrawing the hand, bending forward, and saluting him with his lips on the cheek.*

* The kiss of peace was held singularly sacred by the Normans. When Henry II. consented to meet Becket, after his return from Rome, and promised

Strongbow rose from his knees, the son-in-law-elect, or accepted wooer of the young Princess of Leinster.

"Let me now inquire," said Diarmaid, "the exact number of followers you can bring into the field?"

"About two thousand, including knights and men-at-arms."

"How long will it take you to raise this force?"

"Not long, if I had the permission of King Henry, for I dare not move without his warrant."

"I shall obtain that for you in a few weeks; but delays are dangerous. We might open the campaign, and seize on Wexford with a smaller force than what you mention: know you of other knights who would be willing to engage in this affair, with the hope of winning broad lands in Ireland?"

"There is Robert Fitzstephen, but he has been held in ward for the last three years, by Rees Ap-Griffith."

"By Rees Ap-Griffith, or King of Wales, as he styles himself? His son headed the first landing, and was slain by O'Rourke.* If it were only to revenge his son's death, he will surely liberate Fitzstephen."

"It is likely."

"I shall see him before my return," said Diarmaid. "Who else could you name?"

"And there is Fitzstephen's brother, Maurice Fitzgerald, a noble knight, who would be likely to engage in the same service."

"Is Maurice Fitzgerald the brother of Fitzstephen?"

"The half-brother; they are both sons of Nesta, the mistress of Henry I. After leaving the king, she wedded with Gerald,

to remedy all of which this prelate complained, he struck prophetic dismay into Becket's heart, by evading the kiss of peace.—*Bulwer's Harold*.

* "And there were slain, in the second conflict, by Tiernan O'Rourke, twenty-five of the Kinsellagh, together with the son of the King of Britain."—*Annals of Ireland, A.D. 1167.*

the Governor of Pemroke and Lord of Carew, the father of Maurice Fitzgerald, who is the elder brother. After Gerald's death, she lived as mistress with the Constable Stephen de Marisco, by whom she had Robert Fitzstephen, who is now held prisoner by Rees Ap-Griffith, his grandfather."*

" You know this Robert Fitzstephen well: he is a knight to be relied on?"†

" He is both brave and faithful."

" But unfortunate?"

" He is more his own enemy, than that of others. But in an undertaking such as you propose, he would be in his true element."

" Good. What other soldier of fortune, think you, would be willing to engage in this war, for we have wide manors enough for them all."

" There is my uncle, Hervey de Montemarisco, Maurice Pendergast, Raymon Le Gros, and, I have no doubt, many others, who would willingly embark in the undertaking, were they made acquainted with your princely intentions."

" Well, I must place the enlistment of these foreign auxiliaries,

* " Nesta, the concubine of Henry I., and mother of Maurice Fitzgerald and Robert Fitzstephen, was the daughter of Rees Gruffydh, prince of that country [Wales]. She had been originally the concubine of Henry I." If this be correct, Rees Gruffydh, or Rees Ap-Griffith must have been the maternal grandfather of Maurice Fitzgerald, and Robert Fitzstephen, the latter of whom he held as prisoner. But there was nothing strange in these days in the circumstance of parents holding their children prisoners.—MacGeoghegan's History of Ireland, Chap. XVII. p. 260.

† Giraldus Cambrensis, who was the nephew of Robert Fitzstephen, thus describes his character and person:—" O virum virtutis unicum, verique laboris exemplum, fortuna varia, sortique adverse plusquam prosperè semper obnoxium. O virum toties tam in Hibernia quam Cambria utrasque rotæ circumferentias sequanimitter expertum, et omnia passum.

" Quæ pejor fortuna potesta, atque omnibus usum

" Quæ melior.

" O vere Marium secundum Stephaniden. Cujus si felicitatem respexeris: felicissimum dixeris. Si verum miserais: miserorum omnium, miserrimum videoas. Erat autem vir amplio corpore et integro, vultuque decenti, et statura paulo mediocritatem excedente, vir dapsilis et largus, liberalis et jucundus, sed vino venerique trans modestiam datus."—*Hibernia Expugnata*, lib. I. c. 26.

altogether in your hands, and hasten back to Ireland, to prepare a force to meet them on their arrival. I shall also leave you a *carte blanche*—make liberal offers to all, for I shall not gainsay anything that you promise or propose: as I said before, so say I again, the land is wide, and rich enough for all: if you bring ten thousand, we will give them a *cead mile failte*."

CHAPTER LVII.

EVA'S CURIOSITY.

We must now return, with the hero of our tale, to the monastery of Ferns, where Diarmaid had left Eva, during his absence.

This fair and accomplished young princess was not ignorant of her father's aims and objects, and the nature of the machinery by which he hoped to accomplish them. She had heard that her own fair hand was to reward the noble knight who replaced the crown of Leinster on her father's brow. If we, therefore, say that she took the very earliest opportunity of inquiring of Maurice Regan, respecting the personal appearance, age, and general bearing of the young earl, we conceive we are asserting nothing derogatory to her dignity as a princess, or her modesty as a maiden.

What may have been the sentiments, feelings, or imaginings of those young ladies, in former days, the disposal of whose persons, in matrimony, was arranged by their parents, we cannot positively say. But they were, no doubt, very poetical: the pecuniary part of the transaction being arranged by others, left them full scope for the exercise of those fine and romantic sentiments, which render the period that precedes marriage, the most

interesting of their lives. We fear the contrary of all this prevails in modern days. Those young ladies who are allowed a voice in the disposal of their own fair persons—upon which they set a proper value—take a very practical view of matrimony: and look rather at the finances than the faces, the fortunes than the figures—that is, where the word *figure* is not a synonyme with *fortune*—of their admirers. “When a couple are to be married,” says Goldsmith, “if their goods and chattels can be brought to unite, their sympathetic souls are ready to guarantee the treaty. The gentleman’s mortgaged lawn becomes enamoured of the lady’s marriageable grove; the match is struck up, and both parties are piously in love—according to act of parliament.”

“Maurice,” said Eva to the ollav, the day after his return; “Maurice, you have seen a great deal of the world, since you left us; now, sit down; tell me all about your travels.”

Maurice was commencing a minute and circumstantial account of his travels, beginning at the beginning, when Eva cut across his path, carried him over St. George’s Channel, from thence to France, and back again, without allowing the old man to draw rein or breath, to the city of Bristol. Henry’s court at Aquitane, had no attraction compared with this royal city. “Well, Maurice, what did you see in Bristol?”

“Well, first and foremost, my lady, we saw no one at all; and we thought our journey would all go for nothing, for the foreigners have a queer opinion of us Irish: they think we are no better than savages, and don’t wish to venture their four bones among us.”

“Well, who did you see next?”

“Why, you see, my lady, mankind are gregarious animals, as Shaun O’Davarán says; that is, that they go in a flock: and if you can get one of them to take the lead—more especially if it be the ram, saving your ladyship’s presence—all the rest run

helther skelther after him, leaping one over another, to see who will be first; for the moment the Earl of Pembroke joined the king's standard, they all wanted to join."

"Is it true, Maurice, what my father tells me, that the Earl of Pembroke is a little black man, about forty years of age?"

"A little black man, about forty years of age! Ha! ha! ha! No," said Maurice—wiping the tears from his laughing eyes—"no, my lady, the king, your father, was only joking. A little black man about forty years of age! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Then why do you both call him *Darky Forty*?"

"De-arcu-fori, or Richard De-arcu-forti, my lady, means Richard of the Strongbow," said Maurice, with pedantic pomposity.

"Why do they so style him?" inquired Eva, with increased interest in this hero.

"They say, that like Ulasses, no one can draw his bow but himself."

"Ulysses, you mean. What age do you think he is?"

"As well as I could judge, I should say, thirty, my lady; or, perhaps, twenty-eight, or less: sure that's not too old. You don't like old men?"

"I like you, Maurice."

"May the saints in heaven bless you for that, my lady, and there is no love lost between us."

"Well, what did my father say to him?"

"Say to him, is it? Faith he up, and told him, at once, he had a *colleen dhas*, at home, in Leinster, whose eyes were brighter than the stars; and that the man who helped him to put down O'Conor, and re-conquer Ireland, should marry her, and be heir to his kingdom."

"Well, what did he say?"

"Devil a word. He was dumb-founded, till the king asked him what he thought of his proposition."

"Well?"

"Then, upon my faith, and to do the young man credit, he held down his head, with a great deal of modesty, and said very prettily, "I never shoot at the stars. None but a royal prince could hope to win your daughter's hand."

"Well?"

"Faint heart never won fair lady, said the king, giving him a slap on the shoulder, to arouse him out of his doldrum. To you, I make the first proposal. Do you accept my offer?"

"Accept it!" said the Earl, opening his eyes like oysters.

"Like *oysters!* For shame, Maurice."

"She is yours, man, said the king."

"Well, my lady, with that he blushed up to the very forehead, and going down on his two knees, took the king's hand to kiss it; when your father caught him in his arms, and kissed him on both cheeks. Marriage is a queer thing; they say it is all arranged in heaven, for hundreds of years before it takes place. Do you remember, when you were a little colleen not up to my elbow, saying you would marry a Norman knight?"

"What colored hair and eyes has the Earl of Pembroke?" inquired Eva, without answering the ollav's question.

"Fair hair, and grey eyes."

"Is he handsome?"

"Handsome! Of course, my lady: do you think an ugly man dare presume to think of Eva, the beautiful Princess of Leinster. Sure you did not think, because I called him Darky, in fun, he was a little black heathen of a Connaughtman. The Holy Virgin forbid, and protect my child from all harm. No, he is a fine, tall, comely gentleman, as you would meet in a day's walk."

"Then you would really wish to see me married to this Earl of Pembroke, Maurice, and he a foreigner?"

"Why, seeing there is no prince in Ireland, worthy of your hand—for I am sure you would never think of one of the O'Conor's of Connaught —"

"Never."

"Nor of the O'Neills of Ulster?"

"Nor of the O'Neills."

"Nor of the MacCarthys, nor O'Briens of Munster?"

"Of neither."

"Nor of the O'Melaghlinns of Meath?"

"No; my father's kingdom has been troubled enough by that connexion already."

"You refer to Dearforgil, the Princess of Brefney."

"I do."

"God help her! She was a beautiful creature. She gave me this golden torc, for playing *Savourneen Deelish*. You were very fond of her once, yourself, my lady?"

"I was a child then, and did not know the difference.'

"Did not know the difference," mused Maurice, with a sigh.

"Her name would not be *Eve*, if she had not eaten of the tree of knowledge. What difference?"

"Between a leman and a married wife?

"The devil a much difference I see."

"For shame, Maurice! I did not think you were that kind of man."

Maurice laughed again till the tears ran down his cheeks.
"What kind of man do you mean; for I think you ought to know me by this?"

"To speak in that way of the holy sacrament of matrimony."

"The saints forbid that I should gainsay it, for my own wife, and mother, were honest women—God be with their souls!—

but you must not be too hard on the Princess of Brefney. Let the case be your own.

“The saints forbend !”

“Amen ; but let us suppose—”

“You will oblige me, Maurice, by supposing no such thing.”

“That the Earl of Pembroke—who is all the same as your betrothed husband—was leading you to the altar, when up comes one of the O’Conors, and carries you off; and obliges you to marry him against your will; and keeps you a prisoner, in one of the islands of Lough Corrib, or Lough Mask—”

“I must request, Maurice—”

“But suppose, that the poor Earl of Pembroke—after wandering, for years, up and down the country, in search of you, hears, at long and last, where you are, and goes to release you from the lion’s den : what would you do ? Would you refuse to go with him ?”

“I don’t know ; but I hope I should do my duty by my husband ?”

“Is it, if he was one of the O’Conors?”

“One of the O’Conors ! No O’Conor shall ever be a husband of mine ; and I’m sure you would not wish it ?”

“I’d sooner, a thousand times, see you married to the English Earl.”

“Where did you leave him ?”

“At Bristol.”

“When did you leave Bristol ?”

“It is now more than two months.”

“Two months ! What kept you so long ?”

“We went to Saint David’s, hoping to get a ship there, but were disappointed, which I was not sorry for, as I made the acquaintance of the bishop.”

“What is his name ?”

"Gerald. Giraldus Cambrensis, as they call him. He is a great scribe, and, though a bishop, promised to accompany the expedition to Ireland. I was sorry we did not stay longer in Wales, for I wanted to compare notes with his reverence, but the king, your father, was mad to get back."

"Mad!"

"Yes, almost: there you would see him lying, and languishing on the cliffs of Wales, looking over, with longing eyes, on the Wicklow mountains, and sometimes drawing in and breathing out his native air, the very smell of which seemed to revive him. Let them say what they will, the king is fond of old Ireland.* But here comes Shaun O'Davaran. See, she is off."

"Let her go!" said Shaun, with a frown—adding, "I verily believe, there is more mischief brought to kingdoms and states, by old women, and *old men*, chattering nonsense in the ears of young girls, than ~~by all the~~ the evil counsellors that ever sat in kings' chambers."

"What do you mean, man?"

"I mean, that you have no business to speak in the strain, in which I have just heard you talk, to the princess. What do you know of this Earl of Pemroke?"

"More than you."

"That is not much."

"What do you know against him?"

"*That he is not an Irishman.*"

"What of that?"

"Why, Maurice, I shall by and bye begin to doubt whether

* Cambrensis, who was Bishop of St. Davids, says, "The King of Leinster, languishing and lying for a passage, comforted himself, as he well might, drawing as it were, breathing the air of his country, which he seemed to breathe and smell, sometimes viewing, and beholding his country, which in a fair day, a man may ken and descry."

you are an Irishman yourself. Where is all your patriotism and poetry?"

"If the princess is resolved to have this Norman Earl, is that my fault. Speak reasonably. Why should a man be any the worse for being born out of Ireland; and, may I ask you, Shaun, to whom would you marry her?"

"With marriage contracts, I have nothing to do. I leave such matters to you. Good never comes of them."

"And would you have the girl remain unmarried?"

"Better so than hand over the kingdom to a foreign foe."

"What! is it into a nunnery you would put her. Well, Shaun, I thought you had more of the milk of human nature in your bosom than that."

"And I thought you had more of common sense, and true patriotism; but I believe it is too late now to interfere. It seems to be the will of God"—with a sigh—"that those Normans should become masters of Ireland as well as England. They have long and patiently waited their opportunity, and I believe it has come at last."

"Has anything new occurred, Shaun."

"Robert Fitzstephen has just landed with a strong force, on the Wexford coast"

"Has the king heard it?"

"He has, and is now mustering his forces to join them."

"Blood and fire, that is news"—said Maurice, starting up—"do you think the Danes will join the English?"

"No; I hope they love their country too well."

"*Their* country," muttered Maurice, hastening off in search of the king.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE DANES.

The Danes or Scandinavians possessed themselves, at a very early period, of most of the seaports of Ireland. In 853, Aulaf took possession of Dublin, Ivar of Limerick, and Sitric of Waterford. Cork and Wexford were likewise possessed by them.

The Irish Danes were a kind of free-traders or port-pirates, who fought hard for what they could not filch from the native inhabitants; they were a species of land-sharks, who swallowed all that came within their reach.

The seaports or cities of which they became possessed, were governed by their kings, some of whom were distinguished warriors. Among the most distinguished was Regnar, who, after ravaging many parts of England, invaded Ireland. Perhaps the greatest battle fought by this Danish hero, was that at Vedro-Fiord or Waterford. In the Epicedium, or Death-song of Regnar, we find the following eloquent passage:—

“In heaps promiscuous were piled the enemy,
Glad was the kindred of the falcon :
From the clamorous shouts they boded an approaching feast.
Marstein, Erin’s king, whelm’d by the iron steel,
Allayed the hunger of the wolf and eagle ;
And the slain at Vedra’s ford,
Became the raven’s booty.”

The famous battle of Clontarf,* in which Brian Boru was slain, after gaining a victory over the Danes of Dublin, was not of that

* This famous battle is supposed to have arisen from a dispute at chess, and not from any premeditated effort, on the part of the conqueror, to drive out the Danes. We quote from an interesting little volume, on Irish Church

decided character that the panegyrists of this Irish hero would lead us to suppose. The enemy still continued to hold the seaports of the country, even to the period of which my story treats, when they were wrenched from their hands by the Normans. We are not, therefore, surprised at seeing them uniting with the native Irish, in resisting the landing and settlement of the new foe.

CHAPTER LIX.

ROBERT FITZSTEPHEN AND HERVEY DE MONTEMARISCO.

It was in the month of May, 1169, that a swift herald, who had been watching the Wexford coast, for weeks, announced to Diarmaid the welcome news that the English had landed.

“Where?” inquired the king, with animation.

“In the creek of Cuan-an-bhainbh” [now Bannow] was the reply.

“By whom are they commanded?”

“I cannot tell.”

History, by Dr. King, which deserves to be better known. “The war in which he perished arose, like many great quarrels, out of a trifling matter. A dispute which took place between Malmordha MacMurrough, King of Leinster, and Murtogh, son of Brian Boru, concerning a game of chess, led to such a fatal result. Malmordha vehemently inflamed with passion, and thirsting for revenge, organised a confederacy with all the Danes throughout Ireland, and also induced the King of Denmark, to send over a fresh reinforcement of twelve thousand men; with whom, assisted by the states of Leinster, he proclaimed war against the brave Brian.” That the Irish understood chess, see the paper on “Chess among the Ancient Irish, with engravings prefixed,” to the Translation of the Book of Rights, by Dr. O’Donovan, published by the Celtic Society, 1847.

"What are their number?"

"About four or five hundred men."

"We shall soon know all," said Diarmaid, summoning his lieutenant, and giving directions to have a force of five hundred horsemen, (that lay around him in the woods,) in their saddles that night.

"To horse! to horse!" was his reiterated cry, as he scoured the forest, on his own fiery charger. "Haste men, haste! Let us welcome these brave Normans to our shores, before to-morrow's sun shine on their armour. It must be Robert Fitzstephen," he soliloquised, "or Maurice Fitzgerald, or could it be Strongbow! That, I fear, would be too good news. To horse! to horse!"

Five hundred wild horsemen swept across the country, between Ferns and Wexford, that night, like a whirlwind. The sun had scarcely risen out of the sea before the fierce cheers, or rather screeches of the Kinsellagh* dragoons, saluted the ears of the foreign auxiliaries; but whether they denoted welcome, or defiance, peace or war, it was difficult to decide: "Diarmaid aboo!—a wild screech—" Hurra!"—a wild screech—"Cead mile failte!"—another wild screech.

Diarmaid raised his powerful voice, the sound of which was as distinctly heard, above those of his fellows, as are the silvery tones of St. Paul's church, above those of all the other bells of modern Babylon, and exclaimed, "*Silence!*"

He then rode forward to the shore, and saluted Robert Fitzstephen,† and Hervey de Montemarisco, the paternal uncle of

* The kingdom of Leinster was called Kinsellagh.

† "Robert Fitzstephen landed at the creek called Cuan-an-bhainbh, now Bannow, in the month of May, 1169, with a band of thirty knights, sixty men in coats of mail, and three hundred archers, among whom was Hervey de Montemarisco, or Mountmaurice, the paternal uncle of the Earl Strongbow." —Four Masters, O'Donovan's edition, A.D. 1170, p. 1175, note.

Strongbow. They were surrounded by a band of thirty knights, and sixty men, in coats of mail. A body of archers, with bow in hand, were drawn up in the shape of a half moon.

After cordial greeting and inquiry, on both sides, it was resolved to lose no time in laying siege to Wexford, which was within a mile or two, of where they had fixed their camp. Wexford was at this time in possession of the Danes, who had no desire of submitting to the Normans. But Diarmaid, with his foreign auxiliaries, and five hundred horse, drew up before the place, and demanded its surrender. After some skirmishing, the inhabitants, seeing no prospect of immediate succour, opened their gates, with a good grace, received their lawful sovereign, with due homage, and gave him hostages and presents, as surety of future obedience.*

"I promised," said the king, turning to Fitzstephen, "to make you master of the first town which should fall into our hands. I here fulfil that promise. The city, with its suburbs, is yours. Behold your future Lord," said he, turning to the Danish magistrate, who stood before him. "Present those keys."

The magistrate bowed low, and presented the keys of the city to its new lord and master, Fitzstephen—muttering curses, in the Danish tongue, on the heads of their conquerors.

They were not many days in possession of Wexford, before their little band was strengthened by the arrival of Maurice Prendergast, with a fresh reinforcement, which, together with adhesions in the neighbourhood, swelled the king's army to three

* "The troops being led on against this place, it surrendered to the King of Leinster; the inhabitants paid him homage, and gave him hostages and presents."—MacGeoghegan's History of Ireland, chap. xvi, p. 253. In the *Hibernia Expugnata*, lib. i. c. 3, we read, "The citizens of Wexford gave their invaders a repulse, on the first day, but on the second day they submitted to their lawful prince, Dermot MacMurrough, *by advice of two bishops*, who happened to be in the town at the time."

thousand men, well equipped for war—by no means a contemptible force in those days.

Whither will he now direct his steps? His ambition might point to Waterford, or Dublin, two of the principal seaports in the kingdom; but other feelings, besides those of ambition, possessed his bosom: vengeance burned there—a fire that could be slaked only with blood. His deadly enemy, Killpatrick, the prince of Ossory, still lived—the man who blinded Enna (his favorite son, and once the heir apparent to his throne), still saw the light of heaven.

“Where shall we now direct our steps?” inquired Fitzstephen, after the arrival of Maurice Prendergast—“for we require no large force to garrison Wexford.”

“To Ossory,” said Diarmaid. And to Ossory they went, slaying, burning, and taking preys; spreading terror and devastation through the whole district. Killpatrick, who knew what he had to expect, if he fell into the king’s hands, fled before him, and, in the end, sent messengers, and hostages, desiring peace, offering to pay an annual tribute, in token of his subjection to the crown of Leinster.*

* “Fitzpatrick [recté Killpatrick] was the avowed enemy of Dermot, and one of those who had abandoned him in his misfortune. He was, therefore, the first victim of his resentment. Dermot marched at the head of his army towards the frontiers of Ossory, spreading terror and consternation everywhere as he passed, and obliged that prince to send him hostages, and agree to pay an annual tribute to the crown of Leinster.”—MacGeoghan’s History of Ireland, p. 253.

CHAPTER LX.

THE BRAVE RODERICK AND THE NORMANS.

What was Roderick O'Conor, king of Connaught, about, all this time?

If we were to speak out our own private opinion of this Irish hero, it would not please his panegyrists, or prove very flattering, even on the score of his courage, fortitude, or patriotism. We think he was more of a bully than a soldier; more of a cruel and ambitious tyrant than a brave monarch. The brave Roderick was skulking behind the broad waters of the Shannon; and it was not till the whole island was aroused, it was not till princes and nobles had recourse to Roderick, that "he began to deliberate on what was best to be done." He then assembled a large army and marched into Hy Kinsellagh.

Diarmaid, sensible of his inability to cope with the immense multitudes that followed the standard of the "*Monarch*," (as O'Conor was then esteemed) adopted the Fabian policy of avoiding a battle, and withdrew into the inaccessible forests and fastnesses near Ferns, from which he occasionally issued, swooping down on the disjointed members of the monarch's army.

Foiled in his purpose of subduing Diarmaid, O'Conor sent a communication to Fitzstephen, requiring him, on pain of his displeasure, to quit the kingdom.

"Did you ever hear the story of the rabbit and the hedgehog," inquired the knight of O'Conor's messenger, with a smile.

"Never," said the messenger.

"Well, you shall hear it," said the Norman.

"Once upon a time, a friendly rabbit invited a hedgehog to its burrow, but shortly after, one of the fraternity, feeling the point of the hedgehog's prickles, said, 'I fear there is not room for the two of us, in this hole; I would thank you to move;' 'I am quite content where I am,' said the hedgehog, but if *you* are not comfortable, *you* can move yourself."

"What!" exclaimed Roderick, when the messenger repeated this story to him, "does this Norman knight take me for a rabbit, or a hare; he shall find that the rabbit has the bristles and tusks of a boar. Let him beware!"

Brave words, these. Let us see in what way they were accomplished:—"The monarch," says the Abbe MacGeoghegan, his historical panegyrist, "exasperated at the stranger's haughty reply, ordered his officers to send detachments to scour the forests, and pursue the rebels; but the bishops of the province, alarmed at the idea of a war breaking out amongst them, prostrated themselves at his feet, and pointed out to him the danger of a civil war, which might prove fatal to the nation.

"Roderick moved,"—we are told—"by the remonstrances of the bishops and clergy of Leinster, ceased hostilities, and entered into negotiations with the king of the province. A treaty of peace was signed, and concluded by both parties."

This treaty restored Diarmaid to the possession of the kingdom of Leinster, with the same authority that his predecessors had enjoyed, and compensated him for the losses he had sustained during his misfortunes."

Where are your boar's tusks now, my brave Roderick? Who is the hare, or the rabbit, now?

"The treaty was scarcely concluded between the belligerent parties, when Maurice Fitzgerald, the half brother of Stephen, landed in Wexford, with a considerable reinforcement of

Englishmen, which raised the courage of the rebels to a high pitch.”*

Treaties, in these days, as well as in the present, were kept no longer than it suited the convenience, or humour of the parties. On hearing of the arrival of Maurice Fitzgerald, our hero repaired to Wexford, where a council of war was convened, consisting, as we learn from the Abbe, whom we have so often quoted, of Diarmaid, Fitzgerald, Fitzstephen, Prendergast, Morty, Barry Meiler, and other English chiefs, who decided on the subjugation of the whole island.

Diarmaid had now before him an object worthy his ambition, the undivided sovereignty of the country ; and he proved himself equal to the object. He was as prompt to act, as to decide. Assembling his whole available force, he marched against Dublin, then in possession of the Danes. Revenge, in this case, as well as in his raid into Ossory, was united with ambition, and nerved his arm, and quickened his footsteps, for he remembered that a Danish king of Dublin had treacherously slain his father, and caused him to be buried in the same grave with a dog.†

Asgall,‡ the Dane, at that time the king, or ruler of the place, alarmed at the impending danger, assembled the principal inhabitants to a council of safety, and sent deputies to the King of Leinster, with large sums of gold and silver. Asgall paid him homage, in the name of the city, and gave hostages as pledges of obedience.

* MacGeoghegan’s History of Ireland, chap. xvi. p. 254.

† “His intention was to revenge on the Danes of that city the insults which himself and his father had received from them.”—MacGeoghegan’s History of Ireland, p. 254.

‡ Asgall. He is called “Hasculphus Dublinien—suum princeps,” by Cambrensis in Hib. Expug., and “Herculph MacTurkill,” in the work attributed to Maurice Regan, lib. i. cc. 17, 21. Mr. Moore supposes that they were different persons, but shows no reason on which he grounds his opinion.—See his Hist. Ireland, vol II. p. 228. For the English accounts of the taking of Dublin, see Hib. Expug., lib. i. c. 17.—Four Masters, Dr. O’Donovan’s edition, p. 1176, note.

Diarmaid received the homage and pledges of obedience, for he found the defences of the city stronger than he expected. He resolved, therefore, to wait the arrival of Strongbow. He knew that his revenge for his father's death would "keep."

But Strongbow came not as soon as he was expected—who ever does? The king, therefore, who had retired, for a time, to the rest and privacy of the monastery of Ferns, wrote him the following poetical, and veritable epistle, the style of eloquence of which must redeem the character of our hero from the charge of mere barbarianism, with which it has been most unjustly assailed.

"Diarmaid MacMurrough, King of Leinster, to our well-beloved cousin, Richard, Earl of Strigul and Pembroke, greeting:—Cousin, what delays thy coming, waited for, by us, with more ardent desire than the flowers of spring, or the fruit of autumn. We have seen the storks and swallows, [*i.e.* Fitz-stephen, Fitzgerald, Prendergast, *et hoc genus*] the birds of spring have visited us, but our best friend hath hitherto disappointed our hopes. Neither the breezes of summer, nor the storms of winter, have driven him to our shores."*

* Vide Lingard's History of England, vol. II. p. 225. We do not find that Irish, any more than English kings, (Henry I. was styled *Beaumont*,) were behind their age in literature. We find, from the following entry in the Four Masters, that Roderick O'Conor, whom the reader must have discovered to be no great favorite with the writer, was a patron of literature:—"A.D. 1169. This was the year in which Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair, [Roderick O'Conor,] King of Ireland, granted ten cows every year from himself and from every king that should succeed him for ever, to the Lector of Ard-Macha, in honor of [St.] Patrick, to instruct the youths of Ireland and Alba [Scotland] in literature." Another authority says it was "for learning to the strollers, [*i.e.* the poor scholars] of Ireland and England." Cod. Clarend. tom. 49. The passage is translated into latin, by Colgan, thus:—"A.D. 1169. Rodericus Rex summoperè cupiens in Academiâ Ardmacchanâ studia promovere, honoraria annuaque decem boum pensione, stipendum Archimagiſtri illius scholæ adauxit, et dato diplome suo successores ad eandem pensionem quotannis solvendam obstrinxit, & conditione ut studium generale pro scholaribus, tam ex Hibernia undequaque, quam ex Albania adventantibus Ardmacchæ continuaretur."—Trias Thaum, p. 310.

On receipt of this letter, Strongbow repaired to Henry II., and asked formal permission to leave the country.*

“We cannot refuse favors to those who are determined to have them,” replied the king; you first resolve to depart, and then come to ask our royal leave.”

“Have I your majesty’s permission?” replied the knight.

“Go where you please,” said the king, dismissing him with a frown.†

The Earl, taking immediate advantage of Henry’s dubious words, despatched Raymond le Gros with a small body of troops, to advise the King of Leinster of his own approach.

Raymond le Gros, the Earl’s pioneer, landed on the first of May, 1170, in a small harbour called Dun-Domhnail, within four miles of the city of Waterford, where he formed an entrenched camp, not considering himself sufficiently strong to commence active operations alone.

The Danes of Waterford, hearing of their arrival, resolved to attack them before a junction could be formed between them and their friends. They, therefore, sought the assistance of the Irish chieftain, Malachi O’Faolan, the Lord of Decie, and his followers, and with a force which greatly outnumbered the Normans, surrounded their little camp.

“Hark to the yells of those fiends without,” said Raymond le Gros, addressing Hervey de Montemarisco, who had come, with a few companions, to visit him.

* We do not speak from authority respecting the reign of Henry II., but Dr. Ryland, in his History of Waterford, says of a somewhat later period, “In the statutes of Edward IV. there are many curious enactments, illustrative of the manners and opinions of the times, which assist in filling up the chasms occasioned by the scantiness of our historical records. The ministers and nobles were strictly prohibited leaving the country; *it was even doubted whether they might go coastwise from one part of the kingdom to another.*” p. 22.

† Stonehurst (in his de Reb. in Hib. gest. lib. 2., p. 94) tells us that the king, who was already dissatisfied with Strongbow, granted his request in an imperative and repulsive manner, as if he never wished to hear of him.

"I hear them, and there are enough there to eat us," was De Montemarisco's reply.

"You do not say that they eat human flesh?" said Raymond, laying his hand on his portly stomach.

"I do not know anything of their taste in that way, but if we fell into their hands, I know which of us would be deemed the better prize,"—looking at his fat friend with an arch smile.

"By my halidame, but you joke out of season; but they shall break their teeth on my armour before they touch my flesh. See! see! that mad devil on the wall. Have none of you an arrow there to chastise his curiosity?" addressing a band of archers who stood near. As he spoke, a winged shaft from another part of the little enclosure, pierced the left side of the daring soldier, and came half way out at the right, like a skewer through a trussed fowl. The man dropped dead on the wall.

This incident increased the shrieks and clamor outside ten-fold; and instead of daunting, seemed to stimulate the courage of the besiegers.

"This will never do," said Raymond le Gros. "While we skulk in the camp they hold us for poltrons. We must let them see our faces. What say you, Hervey? Shall we sally forth upon the plain? Better die there than in this narrow hole; it is our only chance, and will give courage to our men: *Una salus victis nullam sperere salutem.*"

"With all my heart," said Hervey de Montemarisco.

Having decided on this movement, Raymond and Hervey, accompanied by all the coats of mail in the camp, made a sally, and cut their way through a whole host of enemies; but what could a handful of men do, in the midst of such a multitude? After a time, they were compelled to return to their enclosure for safety, closely pursued by Malachi O'Faolan, the Lord of Decie, and his wild followers.

The Irish leader, in his hot haste, never thought of looking towards the wall of the encampment, which was now planted with English archers. The first discharge brought a number of these unarmed hinds to the ground:—

“Brittannici sagittarii inermes sauciarunt.”

A second finally checked the progress of the pursuers. The English knights, seeing them halt, turned about and charged them a second time with their whole force. The Irish gave way before them, and fled helter skelter over hedges and ditches, leaving a number of prisoners in the hands of the English.

A council of war was held on the manner of treating them, for they were more numerous than their captors. “Raymond, who possessed a noble mind,” says the Abbe MacGeoghegan, “was in favour of clemency, but Hervetius de Montemarisco harangued the soldiers with such effect, that he instigated them to commit the act of cruelty of which the prisoners were the victims.” That was death.*

CHAPTER LXI.

THE ARRIVAL OF STRONGBOW.

According to the high authority of “Maurice Regan, ollav in penmanship and poetry to Diarmaid, king of Leinster,” the fleet of Richard Strongbow, alias Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke

* We find from Stainhurst that this barbarous act of cruelty was acknowledged and justified by de Montemarisco: “I consider and command,” says he, “that an enemy, not only fighting, but even conquered and bound, should be put to death.” “From this time,” adds Stainhurst, “Hervey was loaded with weighty and lasting disgrace and infamy; nor could one be found whom his carnage of the citizens did not disgust.”

and Strigul, &c., &c.—for this is no place to spare titles—entered the harbour of Port-Laige, or Waterford, on the eve of Bartholomew's day, in the year of our Lord, one thousand one hundred and seventy.

“What do you call the building on the left?” inquired Strongbow, who stood on the prow of the ship, addressing the captain, and pointing to a tongue of land on the Wexford coast, on which a light-house formerly stood; and, for aught we know, may still stand.

“That is the castle of Hook, my Lord.”

“The castle of Hook, is it? What is the building on the left?”

“The church of Crook, my Lord.”

“The church of Crook, is it. Then we must make a landing by Hook or by Crook.”*

Maurice Regan says that Strongbow landed at Downdonnell, near Waterford;† but whether the English knight actually landed by Hook or by Crook, there is no one who understands his character, will say that he ever acted in an unknightly manner. Henry II. may have wrought by Hook and by Crook, and there is no doubt that His Holiness, the Pope, had his Crook in the conquest, and his finger in the pie; but Strongbow was a gentleman who kept his hands clean, a knight *sans peur sans reproche*. If it were otherwise, we should have nothing to do with him. The whole thing was above board, and as plain as a pike staff. “I have been driven from my kingdom,” says Diarmuid to Strongbow. “Will you help me to win it back, and you shall be my heir, and have my daughter, Eva to wife.” What

* Mrs. Hall thinks it not improbable that the expression “*By hook or by crook*,” owes its origin to a remark of this kind, made by Strongbow, on landing at Waterford.

† According to the work attributed to Maurice Regan, Strongbow landed at Downdonnell, near Waterford, on the eve of the feast of St. Bartholomew, with an army of about twelve hundred, of whom two hundred were knights. — See Dr. O'Donovan's notes to Four Masters, A.D. 1170.

knight could refuse so noble an offer. Do you blame him, gentle maiden—*Irish* maiden, though you be? Bear in mind that Eva was fair, *very* fair; and Strongbow a knight of noble mind and mien:—

“He was a man in middle age,
In aspect manly, grave and sage.”

a warrior who trembled, or thrilled, more in lady’s, than in foe-man’s presence.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE SIEGE OF WATERFORD, AND THE MARRIAGE OF STRONG-BOW AND EVA.

The Earl’s following consisted of about twelve hundred men, two hundred of whom were Norman knights. The Four Masters say, “Earl Strongbow came from England, into Ireland, with a numerous force, and many knights and archers, in the army of MacMurrough, to contest Leinster for him, and disturb the Irish, in Ireland, in general.”

Strongbow’s first object was to capture Waterford, a city, up to this period, deemed impregnable, and therefore styled the “*Intacta*:”

“God of his goodness prayesed, that he be,
For the daylie increase of thy good fame,
O pleasant Waterford! thou loyall cytie,
That five hundred years receavest thy name,
Er the late conquest unto thee came,
In Ireland deservest to be peerlysse,
Quia tu semper intacta manes.”*

* In the year 1497 the citizens of Waterford manifested their loyalty to the king Henry VII. by communicating early intelligence of the arrival of Perkin

But neither maiden cities, nor maiden hearts, could long resist the style in which they were besieged by noble knights of yore, if we are to believe all that the poets of the period wrote and sung. But Strongbow was not left to contend alone. He was soon joined by Diarmaid—who gave him hearty welcome, and cordial greeting—and “a goodly number of the Norman knights, and men at arms, who had come over to Ireland before him.”

We shall not attempt to describe the siege of Waterford. Suffice it to say, that “it was defended with great bravery for some days,” by the Danish inhabitants, assisted by O’Faolan, Lord of Decie, and his son; that it was “taken by assault;” that about seven hundred of the Danes and Irish “were slain;” that “the garrison was put to the sword; that the Lord of Decie, and Gillemaire—the Dane who defended the fortress,* or Ring Tower—were made prisoners.

Hervey de Montemarisco proposed that the Irish chief, and Danish captain, should be put to death; but against this in-

Warbeck in Cork: in reward for which loyal zeal they were allowed to adopt the following motto for their city arms:—“*Intacta manet Waterfordia.*” But we find them at a subsequent period, 1603, refusing to open their gates to the Lord-deputy Mountjoy,—pleading the prerogatives of King John’s charter, till the deputy threatened to “draw King James’ sword, and cut the charter of King John to pieces.”

* “Giraldus Cambrensis calls this fortress *Turris Reginald*, which is the tower now commonly called the Ring Tower.”—Dr. O’Donovan’s note to Four Masters, A.D. 1170. This tower (also called Dondory Tower, built by Reginald, the Dane, whose name it bore, till corrupted and abbreviated into Ring Tower) was employed as a place for coining money, as early as Edward IV. A statute in the third year of that monarch’s reign, states, “As the mayor, bailiffs, and commons of Waterford are daily encumbered for want of small coins, for change of greater, it is enacted, at their petition, that the above mentioned small coins be struck at Waterford, in a place called Dondory, *alias* Reynold’s Tower, and that they be made of the same weight, print, and size, as is mentioned in the said act, to be done in the castles of Dublin and Trim, and that they shall have this scripture, ‘*Civitas Waterford*.’ The value of these coins was raised one-fourth above their former value and the currency of England—a miserable expedient, intended to relieve the pecuniary difficulties of the kingdom, and to prevent the practice of clipping money.”

human proposition, not only Strongbow, but the King of Leinster protested:—"No man shall die this day," said Diarmaid: I grant the prisoners their lives."* "De Clare"—addressing Strongbow—"will you ride this way."

The king led the knight without the city into the royal camp, which lay on both sides of the Suir. They forded the river at Grace-dieu, and entered the county Kilkenny. On an eminence, in the distance, stood a splendid tent, covered with green and gold cloth. The royal standard of Leinster waved gently in the evening breeze, from a pole-staff, at the entrance.

"You have nobly fulfilled *your* part of the contract, which we made in the city of Bristol," said the king, addressing his silent companion; but you have not yet asked me to perform *mine*."

"I should have no doubt of your Lordship's honor, had the time even arrived for claiming my reward. Ath-cliath [Dublin] is still in the hands of your foes."

"The time *has* arrived, and the *maiden* too: leave Ath-cliath to me," was Diarmaid's emphatic reply.†

Strongbow started with surprise.

"Mark you the tent of green and gold, from which the royal standard waves?"

The knight raised his eyes in the direction pointed out, and as he looked, his heart palpitated or fluttered like the standard at the door.

* For the humane interference of our royal hero, on this occasion, we are happy to be able to quote the authority of the Abbe MacGeoghegan:—"Malachi O'Faolan, prince of Decie, was made prisoner, and only escaped from the rage of the soldiery, through the interference of the King of Leinster."—Chap. xvi, p. 255.

† "The taking of Waterford was so pleasing to the King of Leinster, that he testified his gratitude to Earl Richard, by renewing the treaty of alliance he had already made with him in England, for which purpose he sent for his daughter Aoife, or Eve, to come to Waterford. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp, between her and the earl; and the king declared them heirs to his crown."—MacGeoghegan's History of Ireland, chap. xvi, p. 255.

"Go," said the king, "make the acquaintance of your betrothed; but your wooing must be short, for your bridals will be celebrated to-morrow. *Au revoir*," turning round his horse's head.

The modest knight actually panted for breath. "Stop, stop, my Lord," he cried, when he had recovered sufficient fortitude to speak.

"Well?" said the king, turning towards him with a smile.

"By my halidame, but you have quite unmanned me, my Lord," raising his helmet, and wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Take courage, man."

"And do you tell me the princess is within the tent?"

"Yes, she waits your coming."

"Oh! my Lord, you should have advised me of this before. I am in no plight to appear in the presence of a royal princess."

"Fear not; faint heart never won fair lady: after making good your entrance into Port-Lairge, you surely do not fear to push aside the curtain of a lady's boudoir."

"It is quite a different affair," said the knight, with a pale smile, and shake of the head.

"What! would you that I should introduce you?"

"Introduce me, eh? Why, yes—no—though perhaps as it is the first time, it would be better. By my halidame, I know not what to say."

"Well, I shall leave you to make up your mind; but I would advise you to do so soon. I wait your return in Reginald's Tower."

Strongbow, after making some hasty strides before the door of the pavillion, pushed the curtain aside, and dashed in with an abruptness which caused the princess to start.—"Fair princess —may I crave—hem—" We must leave the filling up of the

picture to the reader's imagination. That he was as successful as he was timid and awkward in his wooing, is evident from the fact that their nuptials were celebrated the next day, in the midst of the camp. Those who desire to obtain a more elaborate and vivid impression of the ceremony, and accompanying scenery, may do so by examining Maclise's famous picture of "The marriage of Richard Strongbow, Earl de Clare, with Eva, daughter of Diarmaid, King of Leinster."*

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF DUBLIN.

To deny that the king of Leinster nursed his revenge for the Danish inhabitants of Dublin, would be to misrepresent history, and the character of our hero: to revenge his father's death, and the indignity done his corpse, was esteemed, in those days, a virtue; a debt which the son was bound to discharge in his own proper person.

"Stay here, with your bride, and leave the siege of Ath-cliath to me," said Diarmaid, when Strongbow, after his marriage, offered to accompany him to the war. The Jews themselves allowed their newly married soldiers to stay at home with their wives; let alone a Christian knight."

"I pray you will let me accompany you," reiterated the knight.

"Well, if you *will* come, come; but I take the conduct of the affair upon myself."

No lover was more jealous of the undivided affection of his bride, than was Diarmaid of his revenge. He must personally

* The writer is given to understand that this beautiful work of art was lately purchased for eighteen hundred guineas.

revenge his father's blood, on MacThorkil's head. "His father slew my father, and buried him with a dog: my father's blood cries for vengeance."

He advanced at the head of a large army—of which he took the chief command—to the gates of Dublin. He was accompanied by Strongbow, Raymond le Gros, Maurice Fitzgerald, Miles de Cogan, and other Norman knights.

Thorkil, king of the Danes, conscious of his inability to resist, for any length of time, the powerful army by which the city was encompassed, deputed the famous Lawrence O'Toole, who was now the Archbishop of Dublin, to intercede with the vindictive monarch, for peace.

The reader, no doubt, remembers the interview between the king of Leinster and Lawrence O'Toole, described in the twelfth chapter. Diarmaid, on that occasion, endeavoured to extract from the churchman (who was Dearforgil's confessor) whereabouts the lonely island was where the princess of Brefney was confined, and not succeeding by mere entreaty, said, "Tell me of her place of abode, and I swear to thee by the relics of Saint Kevin, thou shalt be Archbishop of Ath-cliath." "Get thee hence, Satan!" replied the priest, wrapping his garments around him, and turning his back on the tempter.

Whether Diarmaid ever forgave this insult, and *proved* his forgiveness, by procuring the see of Dublin for O'Toole, we cannot say; but, that this worthy bishop, and pious man, was employed by Thorkil, to sue with Diarmaid for peace, is a well established fact.

The conduct of this churchman presents a striking contrast to that of the rest of the clergy of his day: we find that, with this noble exception, they all seem to have rendered a willing and ready obedience to the Bull of the Holy Father, authorising Henry II. to conquer Ireland. We have been more than once

surprised, while examining the authorities upon which the principal facts of our story rest, to find the Irish clergy, not merely not opposing, but *actually aiding* the English conquerors. We have been more than surprised, our Irish prepossessions have been shocked, our old preconceived impressions uprooted. We find that truly eminent Irish scholar, Dr. O'Donovan, the editor of the Four Masters, quoting the authority of Cambrensis, in support of the fact that “the citizens of Wexford [the first town that was taken] gave their invaders a repulse on the first day, but on the second day they submitted to their lawful prince, Dermot MacMurrough, *by advice of two bishops, who happened to be in the town at the time.*” We have the authority of the Abbe MacGeoghegan, who was—if it were possible—*Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores;*—(Query, whether were the Young Irelanders, or the Old Irelanders, the more Irish? It would be a difficult question to answer), but we have the authority of the Abbe—who must be classed with the Old Irelanders—for stating that “*the bishops of the province [of Leinster] prostrated themselves at his [Roderick O'Conor's] feet, and pointed out to him the danger of a civil war,* when he was on the point of leading his troops against Diarmaid and his English invaders.”

Those who defend the conduct of these churchmen, must reprobate that of the good bishop, Lawrence O'Toole, who is now a canonised saint; and whom we find uniting with Roderick O'Conor, in besieging Dublin, when in possession of the English. Dublin was attacked soon afterwards by the monarch himself, Roderick O'Conor. In order to secure more firmly the conquest of the city, Roderick O'Conor, and Lawrence, the Archbishop, wrote to Gottred, king of the Isle of Man.* But a year or two after, we find this patriot bishop himself, using his influence to

* MacGeoghegan's History of Ireland, chap. XV., p. 257.

conclude a treaty between Roderick O'Conor and Henry II.* But we need not refer to particular instances, for we find from Lingard's Ecclesiastical History, that "*At a synod of Irish bishops and clergy, convened at Cashel, in 1172, the supremacy of the English monarch was acknowledged.*" From all these circumstances we must conclude, either, that the Irish clergy of those days, were far less patriotic or anti-English, than Roman Catholics imagine, or were in a state of more perfect subjection to the Court of Rome than many Protestants assert.

A modern writer, speaking of the Synod of Cashel, says, "It is evident that *through their [the clergy's] influence, the whole nation was induced to submit to Henry, with a facility which no other means would have secured to the invader.* The following remarkable words occur in a memorial, presented by O Neill, of Ulster, in 1330, to Pope John XXII.;—" During the course of so many ages, our sovereigns preserved the independence of their country. Attacked more than once by foreign powers, they wanted neither force nor courage to repel the bold invaders; but *that which they dared to do against force, they could not do against the simple decree of one of your predecessors, Adrian IV.*"

"I know for what purpose thou art come," said the King of Leinster, addressing this clerical ambassador of peace, but it is vain. I spared the place last year, but the day of vengeance has now come."

"Not so, my son; thy treaty is still binding, nor have the inhabitants done ought to violate it, as thou knowest."

"What! Would you have me keep faith with infidels, when I possess the power of revenging myself and my father's blood?"

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord;" but they are no infidels, my Lord Righ, as I, their bishop, can testify; and hast thou not

* Vide chapter LXVIII., or "Conclusion."

thyself raised an altar to the living God, within the walls of this city, before which a goodly number of the inhabitants bow."

"Thou speakest of the church of Mary of Hoggis?"

"Which thou didst build in the Green.* But were they even infidels, or Jews, thou art bound by thy solemn treaty, made last year."

"They slew my father, and buried him with a dog, and I would be worse than a dog to leave his death unrevenged: all laws, human and divine, demand it: 'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'

"Yes, I would have you to meditate on these words."

"I shall obey them; and doing so, have high authority and example, even in *your* estimation."

"To what do you refer?"

"To the case of Shimei, who only cursed, but did not slay king David; and to whom the king granted pardon; but what said he to Solomon, his son, on his death-bed."

"What said he?"

"Hold him guilty," said the king to Solomon, "and give the hoary old sinner a bloody death."†

"Thou shouldest learn to copy the virtues, and not the imperfections of good men," replied the Archbishop, with a sigh: the sins of good men are recorded that we may avoid them; and their virtues that we may follow them; but we choose the evil, and leave the good; and this is not the first instance in which thou hast followed the erring footsteps of the king of Israel."

"To what dost thou refer?"

"Is there no small voice of conscience to point my words; no inner monitor which says, '*Thou art the man?*'"

* College Green, we are informed by the Abbe MacGeoghegan, was called "Hoggis Green."

† 1 Kings ii. 9.

“Pooh! Thou dost refer to the princess of Brefney. You remind me that I have an account to settle with O'Rourke; which, with God's blessing on my arms, I shall do, before I return to Leinster; for I did not slay him, as David did Uriah; though far more worthy of it.”

“Be not self-deceived, my son: we too often esteem those offenders to whom we have done the injury: the injured party *may* forgive; the injurer, never.* But hark, what shouts are these?”

The king, who heard the wild shouts, started, looked up, and exclaimed, “Hurrah!”—drawing his sword, and hastening towards the walls of the city, where the Normans had made a breach, during his parley with the bishop.†—“Adieu, father, we shall meet, just now, *within* the city.”

Pyrrhus did not pursue Polites,‡ with more savage thirst of blood, through the streets of Troy, than did Diarmaid, MacThorkil the Dane, through the streets of Dublin:

“Illum ardens infesto vulnere Pyrrhus
Insequitur, jam jamque manu tenet, et premit hastâ.”†

Haste thee, Diarmaid, or he escapes thee after all. See! there he is surrounded by a ring of Danish warriors: you know

* “Diarmaid, well pleased with this conquest, left a garrison in the city, the command of which he gave to Milo Cogan, after which he turned his arms against O'Rourke, prince of Brefney, to punish him for a crime which he himself had committed; according to the proverb which says, that the injured are generally punished instead of the aggressors! The violation of the wife of the Prince of Brefney, was revenged on his vassals, by the violater himself.”—MacGeoghegan's History of Ireland, p. 256.

† “While this holy prelate was deliberating with the king, in his camp, Raymond le Gros, Maurice Fitzgerald, and Milo Cogan, followed by their troops, entered the city by a breach, on the 21st of September, and made themselves masters of it, sword in hand, sparing neither sex nor age.”—MacGeoghegan's History of Ireland, p. 256.

‡ *Aeneid* II. 529, 530.

them by their red shields.* Your Norman auxiliaries have not yet succeeded in piercing their circle.

“Fag a bealac! Diarmaid aboo!” Nothing can resist the king’s onset; the Danish ring is broken, but the sword of the conqueror has not yet touched the flesh of MacThorkill. See, he flees down yonder lane, Diarmaid thundering at his heels—he nears the river Liffey. Will he gain it? Yes—and he plunges into the deep stream, and sinks with the weight of his brigandine and heavy jack-boots. God has avenged thy father’s blood, Diarmaid. No, not yet—he rises again: he is a strong swimmer, and makes for that Danish boat. Set the dog after him, Diarmaid. “Thorkil! Thorkil! Thorkil! hurru boy! good dog! after him,” cried the king.

The hair bristled on the hide of the old dog, (who was almost blind, and very feeble,) like the unused armour on the trembling shoulders of the aged king of Troy, when preparing for the unequal contest:

“Arma diu senior deseuta trementibus ovo
Circumdat nequicquam humeris et inutile ferrum
Cingitur ac denses fertur moriturus in hostes.”

The brave old dog dashed into the stream, crowded, at this time, with Danes, fleeing for refuge to their ships. He was, we have said, almost blind, and the water threw him off the scent, but his intuitions seemed to point in the right direction; but not with their pristine certainty.

“He sees him not,” exclaimed Diarmaid. “Hurry! Thorkil! before you, dog—after him.”

* The Danish champions are thus described by Hanmer, from Cambrensis:—“They were all mighty men of war, and well appointed, after the Danish manner, being harnessed with good brigandines, jacks, and coats of mail; their shields, bucklers, and targets were round, and coloured red, and bound about with iron, and as they seemed in arms, so they were no less in mind, iron-strong and mighty.”

MacThorkil, the fugitive king, hearing his name pronounced, and, as he thought, in friendly accents ; and imagining his troops had rallied on the bank, raised himself in the water, and turned round. It was all the dog required. The fire flashed from his red eye, as he pawed the water in pursuit of the Dane.

"He sees him now," exclaimed the King of Leinster : "and by the Holy Virgin, gains upon him ;—and will throttle him before he reach the ship. Hurrah, Thorkil!" clapping his hands.

The Dane, hearing the plashing of water near his ear, looked about, and for the first time saw the dog, who made a quiet chop at his throat, but missed it ; and received, in return, a blow from the Dane's gauntlet, which almost stunned him ; but did not beat him back ; though it caused him to hesitate, and decide on taking his namesake on the left flank. He may have reasoned—for dogs do reason, and in the water, too*—that he would not have the same use of the left hand, as of the right. He was swimming round him, apparently with this object, when MacThorkil raised his heavy jack-boot, high out of the river, like a shark's snout, and brought it down with the force of a sledge-hammer on the dog's head.

This blow decided the contest between the man and the dog—between Thorkil and MacThorkil. The dog sunk like a stone in the middle of the stream. "*A anam — !* he has killed my dog—my noble dog"—exclaimed Diarmaid, who saw him sink. "No, he is up again. Thank God !"

He did rise for a minute or two, which he employed in making circles in the rippling flood, and then sunk to rise no more. *Pax tibi !* thou noble brute.

* A boat was upset containing two men and a dog. The dog, who was large and powerful, bore the first to a rock near at hand ; swam back for the second, and carried him to shore ; and then returned for the first he had left on the rock. The dog would seem to have reasoned, that had he waited to carry the first to shore, the second would have sunk.

MacThorkil gained the ship, and made good his escape to the Isle of Man, or the Orkneys—we cannot say, with certainty, but it was either the Isle of Man, the Orkneys, or the Hebrides.* But it does not signify :—

“Joy be with him, and a bottle of moss,
If he never comes back, he’s no great loss.”

But he did come back, like a bad penny—having left his “treasures and valuable effects in the Isle of Man.” We are informed by Mr. Connellan, that Asculph [MacThorkil] determined to attempt the recovery of Dublin, and collected a great force of Danes and Norwegians from the Orkneys, Hebrides, and Isle of Man; and about Whitsuntide, A.D. 1171, landed at Dublin, with a fleet of sixty ships and ten thousand men. Maurice Regan—yes, reader, the veritable Maurice Regan—gives us a description of one of the commanders of this Danish army. He was a man of gigantic stature. He was called by some, John le Dene, and by others, John Wode, signifying John the Mad, or Furious. The garrison of Dublin was commanded by Miles and Richard de Cogan, assisted by an Irish prince named Giollamocholmäge. John le Dene, at the head of his Norwegians, made a furious assault at the east gate, (called Dames-gate, from the ancient church of St. Mary les Dames, situated near the castle). The place was defended by Miles de Cogan, who was repulsed with great slaughter. Richard de Cogan rushed out at the south gate with his cavalry, and charged the Danish forces in the rear, who fled to their ships. John the Furious, scorning to fly, fought with amazing valour, and slew great numbers with his own hand. Amongst

* “On the taking of Dublin, the Danish King, Asculph MacThorkil, with many of the wealthy citizens, fled to their ships in the Liffey, and sailed to the Isle of Man and Orkneys, with their treasures and valuable effects.”—Mr. Connellan’s Notes, Four Masters, p. 538-9.

his feats, it is recorded by Regan, that with a single blow of his battle-axe, he cut off the thigh of an English horseman, so that the limb fell to the ground on one side, and the body on the other. But the heroic John, overcome by numbers, was slain by Miles de Cogan and Walter de Riddlesford.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE DEATH OF CONCHABAR.

After the capture of Dublin, Diarmaid hastened to Brefney, accompanied by De Lacy, hoping to take O'Rourke by surprise; but he, (as well as MacThorkil, the Dane,) escaped the hands of the conqueror, and fled across the Shannon, seeking the protection of his old patron, and kinsman, Roderick O'Conor.

“But what was the brave Roderick about all this time?” the reader very naturally inquires. “Was he not, as Grand Monarch of Ireland, in a position to assemble a force, which would be able to drive Diarmaid, and his handful of Norman auxiliaries into the sea?”

So we should have thought, but did we not say before, that Roderick O'Conor was a poltron; more of a bully than a hero. But lest it should be supposed that we have taken up a foolish prejudice against the brave Roderick—for authors sometimes depreciate those whose conduct is opposed to the hero of their tale—we shall again quote the authority of the monarch's historical panegyrist, the Abbe MacGeoghegan:—“The Monarch of Ireland beheld, *tranquilly*, during a whole year, the progress which the King of Leinster was making, without taking any

measures to check the course of his victories; *but finding him to approach his own borders*, and knowing that such an enemy, when near him, must be dangerous, he became alarmed. The season, however, being too far advanced to take the field, he sent an officer to *reproach* him for his perfidy."

Diarmaid's reply to the monarch was, that it was his intention to make himself master of the kingdom, before he laid down his arms.

What did Roderick do or say to this?

He did as cruel and blood-thirsty a deed as king ever did. He held—the reader is aware—the two sons of Diarmaid as hostages: he caused one of these sons, Conchabar, the youngest, to be put to death. Enna's blindness saved him. Conchabar was the roydamna. "This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours," argued the brave O'Conor, in the spirit of the Jewish husbandmen.

The Abbe and others endeavour to throw doubt on the murder of the young man, but there is no historical fact better established. "O'Conor, the translator of Keating's History of Ireland (writes Dr. O'Donovan), and some other modern Irish antiquists, as O'Brien, in his absurd work upon the Round Towers of Ireland, assert that King Roderick did not execute the son of Dermot MacMurrough, who had been delivered as a hostage for his father's fidelity; but we have the contemporaneous testimony of Giraldus Cambrensis, that this execution took place: *Indignans Rothericus, filium ejus quem ei (supra, c. 10) obsidem dederat, capitali sententiā condemnavit.*"—Hib. Expug. lib. i. c. 17. The Doctor is naturally indignant at this attempt of a capital falsification of Irish history; he calls those who attempt it "modern Irish antiquists." Antiquirks he might have said, for, as Shakspeare would express it, their twists, and turns, and perversions of history, "Excel the quirks of blazoning pens."

CHAPTER LXV.

DE LACY.

"De Lacy," said Diarmaid, looking down upon this little Norman knight, the ridge of whose helmet rose no higher than the king's elbow. But let us describe the mannikin, who performed a man's work in the conquest of Ireland. He was very small and hairy, but strong, compact, and sinewy; with a short neck and small black eyes, which lay deep in his head.*

"De Lacy," said the king, addressing this little hero, after hearing that O'Conor had laid violent hands upon the young prince, "I do not feel well, and it would be useless to follow O'Rourke further, who lies hid with O'Conor among the wilds of Connemara."

De Lacy looked up curiously into the king's face, and saw a strange change had come over it; it was pale and haggard. "I leave it with you," continued he, "to revenge the young man's death, for I purpose returning at once to Ferns; and if you be true friend of mine, let not O'Rourke escape, for he, I doubt not, has had a part in the shedding of this innocent blood."

"Leave O'Rourke in my hands," replied the little man, with a fierce flash of his dark eye, "and if I don't *string* him up, my name is not *De Lacy*. Ha! ha! ha!"

* Lest the reader should suppose we have drawn an ugly likeness of this Norman hero, we beg to lay the picture painted by the pen of Holinshed before him:—"His eyes were dark and deep-set, his neck short, his stature small, his body hairy, not fleshy, but sinewy, strong and compact; a very good soldier, but rather rough and hasty."

The king smiled faintly at the Norman's pun. The Normans were rather slow in the department of punning, but this was decidedly smart.

"I hear," said De Lacy, after finishing his laugh, "that you have an old grudge against this O'Rourke; that, in fact, he ran away with your wife, the Queen of Leinster."

"No, the fact is——"

"Is what?"

"Rather the contrary of that."

"That you ran away with his! Eh? Is that it?"

Diarmaid nodded.

"Then the more occasion to put him out of the way. Leave him to me; I'll string him up. Ha! ha! ha!"

"But she was my betrothed bride before she became his wife."*

"Phew!" was the half whistled exclamation of the knight.
"And loved you, of course?"

"Of course," said Diarmaid, "or she had not left her husband for my sake."

"Of course," replied the little hairy man, "and I hear he is a big ugly brute."

"His person is repulsive and his face deformed."

"I'll string him up for you, and you can marry the widow, as king David did, and then it will be all right and proper. I am no saint, but, by my faith, I am a Christian knight, and keep the commandments—where it is possible."

"Well, I may depend on you to hunt out O'Rourke?"

"Leave him to me. I'll string him up, or my name's not De Lacy. Ha! ha! ha!"

* "Derforquill, daughter of Mortugh MaeFloinn [O'Melaghlin] prince of Meath, was married against her will to Teighernan O'Rourke, prince of Breffney. This princess indulged a secret passion for Dermot, son of Murrough, king of Leinster, who paid his addresses to her before her marriage."—MacGeoghegan's Irish History, chap. xvi. p. 251.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE DEATH OF DIARMAID.

Whether it was that the death of the young prince preyed upon the father's mind, for he knew the character of O'Conor, and the jeopardy in which he had placed his son, by approaching the borders of his kingdom, among the fastnesses of which he lay like a savage beast in his den, or an eagle in his eyre, with his talon on its prey—whether it was this conviction, or something else, we cannot say, but Diarmaid was seized, just at this time, with a mysterious and fatal malady. The Four Masters have the following entry on the subject, under date A.D. 1171. “Diarmaid MacMurchadha, king of Leinster, by whom a trembling sod was made of all Ireland, after having brought over the Saxons, after having done extensive injuries to the Irish, after plundering and burning many churches, as Ceanannus, Cluain-Traird, &c., died before the end of a year of an insufferable and unknown disease; for he became putrid while living, through the miracle of God, Colum-Cille, and Finnen, and the other saints of Ireland, whose churches he had profaned and burned some time before;* and he died at Fearna-mor, without [making] a will, without penance, without the body of Christ, without unction, as his evil deeds deserved.”

A man may be sick, both in body and mind, without a miracle, or the intervention of Columkill. But if there were no Columkill, to kill Diarmaid, the Four Masters themselves would Come-

* But Diarmaid built up, as well as burned down, many churches. Even MacGeoghegan acknowledges that he “*founded several religious houses.*”—Irish History, p. 256.

and-kill him, for they detested his memory. What a monstrous pun; but I had nothing else at hand to dash at the heads of these Four Masters: "Furor administrat arma."

But who, let me ask, possessed of the proper feelings of men, could gloat over the death-bed of a poor sinner, like this, left to perish "without penance, without the eucharist, and without extreme unction." Who would have the heart to say, under such circumstances, "His evil deeds deserved it." Ah! if we all got according to our deserving, "who would escape whipping." Perhaps even you, gentlemen—

Hark! how he raves! Now of his son, Conchabar; and now of O'Conor; now of MacThorkil, and now of his poor old dog; and now of blind Enna, till a hot tear seems to moisten his fiery eye-balls. He changes his mood. Whom does he now name? His daughter, Eva; and now, with even milder accents, and uplifted hands and eyes—as if praying for pardon—he whispers a name which has not passed his lips for many a long day:—

"*Dearforgil*, if thou art now a holy nun, or saint in heaven, pray for me; for if I sinned, it was in loving thee to well. Oh! God, if Una, after all, were innocent! Hell! hell! how I thirst."

Was there no good Samaritan to bring him even a cup of water? Yes; see a figure, enveloped from head to foot in sable, approaches the bed, and holds a vessel to his lips. He drinks, and as he returns the cup, looks curiously beneath the hood of her who bore it:—

"Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And as she stooped his brow to lave,
Is it the hand of Clare, he said,
Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"

"Who art thou?" inquired he, with the fierceness of fear, after piercing with an eye of fire through the heavy veil which was intended to conceal the face—"Speak."

"Diarmaid, it is I. It is your wife, Una," exclaimed the Queen of Leinster, uncovering her face, and falling on her knees at the bed-side.

"Avaunt, foul fiend," exclaimed the dying monarch, springing out of the other side of the bed—"Una is dead."

"No, Diarmaid, I live. I live to ask your pardon, and Oh! my Lord, as you expect the forgiveness of heaven, grant it me, before I die."

"Thou dost deceive me: thou art Una's ghost. I saw it in the turret of Kildare—avaunt!"

"You saw me living there."

"I was told by a holy father thou wert dead."

"So it is said of all who enter the church."

The dying king considered, grew more calm, and in the end was persuaded to re-enter the dying bed.

The exertion was too great for him. It prostrated his failing energies. Una marked its effect on his pale cheek, and said nothing to excite him. By and bye he seemed to sink into a quiet sleep. He awoke in the full possession of his faculties, looked about him, and seeing the queen sitting at his side, asked, "What brought you here?"

"I came, in the first instance," replied she, with a timid, trembling voice, "to ask thy pardon."

"Thou wast more sinned against than thou hast sinned. What else brought thee?"

"I heard that thou wast sick and alone, and came to take care of thee."

There was a muscular motion about the mouth of the dying monarch, which betrayed the difficulty he felt in mastering his feelings. "What else brought you?"

"I came to ask you of my son, of Conchabar. What of him?"

"*He is dead,*" said the king, in a husky and emphatic voice.

"Oh! God," exclaimed the queen, falling on her knees, and raising her hands to heaven, "my cup is full; my darling boy is dead. Murdered by O'Conor?"

"And Enna; has he slain the poor blind boy also?"

"No, his blindness saved him."

"O God! I thank thee. But for me, or he had been slain also. How mysterious are thy ways!"

"What mean you, woman?" inquired the king, narrowly and curiously scanning her pale and agitated face.

"It was I—— Oh! Diarmaid, can you forgive the wicked madness of a mother's love?"

"Speak. Though you need not; I know all. It was as I suspected."

"Yes, it was I who caused him to be blinded."

"By your paramour, Killpatrick?"

The queen hung her head, like the woman described in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel. By and bye her bosom swelled and heaved, like the ocean during the throes of an earthquake.

"May God forgive you as sincerely as I do. May God forgive us both," said he, extending his hand to her.

She seized it like a drowning woman, laid her face on it, and washed it with her tears, till it struck her the hand had lost its pressure. He was dead.

Thus died Diarmaid, King of Leinster—"a monster (according to MacGeoghegan) whose memory must be abhorred by all true Irishmen; who sacrificed his country to his revenge, and caused her to submit to a yoke, which she has never since been able to shake off."

This is the language of *the Chaplain of the Irish Brigade IN THE SERVICE OF FRANCE*; the language of the friend and historian of James II. I pray you, my dear Ahbe, not to forget the circumstances under which the Irish brigade was called into

being; to compensate the French monarch for the troops he sent into this country, *to replace James II. upon his throne.* The friend of James II. ought to have some sympathy for Diarmaid. Diarmaid did no more than James *tried* to do, *to regain his kingdom by the aid of foreign troops.*

“Oh! wad some power, the giftie gie us,
To see oursel’s as others see us;
It wad frae monie an error free us,
And foolish notion.”

CHAPTER LXVII.

UNA AND DEARFORGIL.

It was late, near twelve o’clock, on a cold winter’s night, that two travellers, a male and female, sought shelter in the Abbey of Mellifont. The woman, who was carried through the corridors in the arms of her companion, who was blind, was evidently dying.

The mother abbess, who was styled Sister Magdalene, hastened to give all the aid which the house could afford, to the dying stranger; whose pale, but high brow, and delicate hands and feet, denoted gentle blood and rearing.

The mother abbess, who must have been very beautiful, when young, tended the stranger, in person; made her bed, and her cordials, with her own fair hands, and sat and watched her till she slept. And when she judged, by her breathing, that she slept soundly, rose, took down the lamp, which hung from the

ceiling, caused its light to fall upon the face of the stranger, and scanned each feature with absorbing interest.

What causes the rays of the lamp to leap or play upon that pale dying face, like moonbeams on broken water. Look up and you will see the hand of the mother abbess trembling, like a woman in the ague.

The dying stranger at this moment opened her eyes, and appeared evidently surprised to find herself the object of so close and searching a scrutiny. "Dost thou know me?" inquired she.

"Yes," was Sister Magdalene's timid, and trembling reply.

"Who am I?"

"The Queen of Leinster."

"Where did you see me before?"

"In the *Caislean na Nua* in Lough Ree."

"How so? I do not remember you."

"You went there in the garb of a young priest."

"Who are you?"

"I also saw you at Tara, in the Cave of the Curse."

The queen started up, seized the lamp from the hands of the mother abbess, passed and re-passed it across her face. "Take it!" said she, falling back in the bed. Strange and terrible changes and contortions came over that pale face, before it attained the placid resignation with which she entered the cell. And after it had attained its placidity, it bore a haggard look, which told of the fierce struggle it had endured—a struggle with the Demon, *Revenge*.

"Can you forgive me," said Dearforgil, bowing down her head, and revealing, in the act, the scar of the wound inflicted by the queen's poinard.

"Thank God! yes. I also thank the arm which turned aside the weapon with which I sought your life, or you had gone

with all your sins upon your soul, to the presence of your Judge. I see the mark of the skein on your shoulder. How did you discover me? I must be greatly changed."

"I should never have known you, but for Prince Enna."

"What! you knew him, then?"

"No, he knew me."

"Poor fellow! he has followed me in all my wanderings, much against my will. He returns me good for evil; for it was I, who—. But why should I conceal my sins. It was I who caused him to be blinded; and feeling this, the boy's affection fills my soul with sorrow and remorse."

"Yes, we can endure the vengeance and wrath of those we have injured with more fortitude than we can their kindness. The forgiveness and love of our enemies heaps burning coals of fire upon our heads," said Dearforgil, laying her hand on her throbbing temples.

"He might be happy in his sister's palace, but—

"His *sister's palace!* what mean you?"

"Have you not heard of her marriage with Strongbow, Earl de Clare, who now sits upon the throne of Leinster?'

"What of the king?"—trembling.

"He is dead!"

Dearforgil bowed down her head low. When she raised it, her eyes were red; so were those of the queen. Their glances met; they read each others thoughts, and blushed; their arms opened; they wept on each other's bosom; and at that moment loved each other all the more, for their common love of Diarmaid.

How strange, mysterious, contradictory, and, at the same time, how interesting, beautiful, and—shall we say—sublime—yes, let it be sublime, or angelic—for we want a climax—is the love of woman!

Dearforgil watched over the queen's dying bed, with the affection of a sister, and received her dying blessing.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

The rest of our tale is soon told. Dearforgil lived to the advanced age of eighty-five, and died, to use the language of the period, in the sanctity of holiness after the victory of penance.

Poor Nedha obtained a like victory, and sighed and wept over it, like the girl that was converted before the fair. "She would much rather—but it is now no matter—God's will be done."

As it regards O'Rourke, we find the following entry in the Annals of Ireland, A.D. 1172. "Tiernan O'Rourke, Lord of Brefney, was treacherously slain at Tlaghtgha, by Hugo de Lacy and Donal, son of Annadh O'Rourke, one of his own tribe. He was beheaded, and ignominiously carried to Dublin; his head was placed over the town gate, and his body was gibbeted with his feet upwards, on the north side of the city, a woful spectacle to the Irish."

The little Norman, Hugh de Lacy, kept his word of "stringing him up."

But did he keep his promise to Diarmaid, of revenging the death of his son upon O'Conor?

He did, most honorably.

How?

By marrying O'Conor's daughter! Yes, you may stare; but if she was as fair as Irish maidens usually are, and as fascinating

as Irish princesses *always* are; and he, the little hairy ouran-outang that Holingshed describes him, we know of no more accomplished mode of visiting the iniquities of the father upon the child.

The death of De Lacy himself was tragical enough. It is attributed by some, to Columbkill, and by others, to a rival's revenge. We are informed that De Lacy threw down the famous monastery of Columbkill, and erected the castle of Dearmagh, or Durrow, on the site. "After completing the castle of Dearmagh, he came out to view it, accompanied by one-third of the English; when there came towards him a certain young man,"—the wooer of O'Conor's daughter, no doubt—"whose name was Giollaganionathar O'Miaidh; who having a battle-axe concealed about him, gave De Lacy a blow which struck off his head, which, along with the body, rolled into the castle ditch, at the sanctuary of Columbkill. Giollaganionathar made his escape by flight, both from the English and Irish, into the wood of Clair."

The body, we learn from the same authority, (Ware) was concealed for nine or ten years, till 1195, when it was interred with great pomp in the abbey of Bective, in Meath; Matthew O'Heney, Archbishop of Cashel, and John Comyn, Archbishop of Dublin, attending the ceremony. If we take into account the size of the body, and that it was only a headless trunk—a *trunk* indeed, for it was covered with *hair*—we must confess that all due honor was done this little man.

But what of the brave Roderick? He, like a wise man, made his peace with the English—as the reader has no doubt, already concluded, from the circumstance of his having given his daughter in marriage to De Lacy—made submission to Henry II., as lord paramount, and was allowed to enjoy his kingly titles to the end of his inglorious reign. "Roderick O'Conor," writes his panegyrist, "finding himself almost universally deserted, was

obliged to yield to the necessity of the times. Henry sent two noblemen, Hugh de Lacy and William Fitzaldehm, to request an interview with him, in consequence of which the two princes met on the banks of the river Shannon, where the time was spent in paying mutual compliments."

As O'Conor's men were posted in marshes and in woods, where Henry thought it imprudent to attack them; "a treaty was concluded between the English and Irish kings, at Windsor, during the octave of St. Michael, through the mediation of Lawrence, Archbishop of Dublin, and Catholicus or Codla O'Dubhaig, Archbishop of Tuam."*

We find the following entries, descriptive of the termination of his career, under their proper dates, in the Four Masters:—

"A.D. 1191. Roderick O'Conor set out from Connaught, and went to Flaherty O'Muldory, in Tirconnell, and afterwards passed into Tyrone, to request forces from the North of Ireland, to enable him to recover his kingdom of Connaught; but the Ultonians not consenting to aid in procuring lands for him, from the Connacians, *he repaired to the English of Meath*, and these having also refused to go with him, he passed into Munster, whither the Sil-Murray sent for him, and gave him lands, viz.: Fir Frachrach and Kinelea of Echtge."

"A.D. 1198. Roderick O'Conor, King of Connaught, and of all Ireland, both English and Irish, died in canonical orders, at Cong, after sincere repentance, victorious over the world and the devil; his body was conveyed to Clonmacnoise, and was interred there, on the north side of the altar of the great church."

* The copy of this treaty is to be found in Roger Hovedon, an English writer of the same century, under date of the year 1175. The conditions were that Roderick should pay an annual tribute to the King of England, as Lord of Ireland; that he should always retain the title of monarch, and that the provincial kings should be dependent on him, as previously.

We shall now dispatch that scoundrel, Killpatrick, or tell the reader all we know of him. The day after the arrival of Henry II. in Ireland, he along with O'Faolan, prince of Decei, (whose life Diarmaid saved, after Waterford was taken,) made submission to the English monarch. We find it recorded in the Annals of Innisfallen, that "the English forces commanded by Raymond le Gros, joined by some Irish allies, under MacGillpatrick, prince of Ossory, fought a great battle, in a defile near Cashel, with the troops of Donal O'Brien; in which, after a great slaughter on both sides, the Irish were defeated." What happened to him after this, we know not, but there is a common prediction, that "rogues live a long time," and "have the *devil's* luck."*

We have already stated that Strongbow, by his marriage with Eva, became heir to the kingdom of Leinster. In order to avert the wrath, or propitiate the favour of Henry II.—who was jealous of his subject's great success—he delivered Dublin into his hands, and did homage for the rest of his possessions. He was besieged by the Irish in the city of Waterford, in A.D. 1174, and rescued from imminent peril by his friend, Raymond le Gros. He died of mortification of the foot, in 1177, and was buried in Christ Church, Dublin, where his monument may be seen to the present day.

Beside the large stone figure of the knight, lies a smaller figure which seems to have been cut in two. There is an old tradition that it represents Strongbow's son, whom he cut in two, with a blow of his sword, for cowardice in battle. But Strongbow had no son—not, at least, by Eva. The appearance of the second stone figure is explained by the following inscription, which

* Since writing the above, we have met the following passage:—"Henry II. received the princes [Killpatrick and O'Faolan] with great honour; he promised not only to take care of their safety, but to advance them in dignity, and loaded them besides with magnificent presents."—*Stan. de Reb. in His. Gest.* 125.

states that Strongbow's monument was *broke*, by the fall of the roof of the church:—

“THIS AUNCYENT MONUMENT OF
RYCHARD STRANGBOWE, CALLED COMES STRANGULENESIS,
LORD OF CHEPSTO AND OGNEY,
THE FIRST AND PRINCIPAL INVADER OF IRELAND, 1169,
QUI OBIT, 1177,
THE MONUMENT WAS BROKEN BY THE FALL OF THE ROFF,
AND BODYE OF CHRISTES CHURCHE, IN AN. 1562.”

There can be but little doubt, that the figure which lies beside the knight, and which was cut in twain, by the “fall of the roff and bodye of Christes Church,” is intended to represent Eva. This looks like a judgment of the Church upon Eva and her seed. What of her descendants? Did she leave any?

She left one daughter, Isabel, who was married to William le Mareschal, Earl Marshal of England, and afterwards Earl of Pembroke. The following anecdote is recorded of the eldest son of this earl, and the grandson of Eva and Strongbow. He took forcible possession of two manors belonging to the Bishop of Ferns, for which he was excommunicated, and died without absolution. After his death the Bishop went to London, and laid his case before the King, entreating, *for the sake of the earl's soul*, that his Majesty would use his authority to have the manors restored; adding, that on their delivery, the earl, though dead, might obtain the benefit of absolution. The king, moved by this appeal, agreed, and accompanied the bishop to the earl's tomb, who, in a loud voice, delivered himself thus:—“O William, that here liest interred, and wrapped in the bonds of excommunication, if the thing which thou hast injuriously taken away

from my church, be restored by the king, or by thine heir, or by some of thy kindred, or friends, with complete satisfaction, *I absolve thee*; otherwise I do ratify this sentence; that thou, being ever wrapped in thy sins, remain damned in hell."

Were the manors restored to the church?

Never; for William, the eldest son of the earl, had no bowels of compassion for his father's soul.

When the bishop saw his case was hopeless, he pronounced these awful words:—“*What I have said, I have said. What I have written, I have written.*”

“He then departed,” says a modern writer, from whose work (Hall’s Ireland) we have taken the anecdote, “prophecying all manner of ill success to Earl William and his brothers.” In allusion to this affair, Keating says:—“Out of five sons, not one survived to enjoy the cursed acquisitions of the father, who died childless.” But the angry historian is in error; *for the excommunicated earl left TEN CHILDREN, through whom his possessions were handed down to succeeding generations.*

Enna, who was blinded by Killpatrick, left issue, and became ancestor of the family of Kinsellagh.

The young man whom we have called Conchabar, and who is styled “Prince Donald,” by Maurice Regan, also left issue, whose descendants remain to this day. The present Arthur (Art) Mac-Murrough Kavanagh, Esq., of Borris, is a lineal descendant of the hero of our tale. Walter MacMurrough Kavanagh, his son, whom Doctor O’Donovan, in his genealogical table or tree* of this family, styles “*Lageniae Decus et Spes*,” was born January 14th, 1856.

It is with as much pleasure as surprise we discover that Doctor O’Donovan himself is a descendant of the royal family of Leinster. If there be glory in *great works*, we can see no impropriety in

* Vide papers of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, No. 4, July, 1856.

putting after his name LAGENLÉ DECUS, for no greater or more valuable work has ever been produced in this country, than his edition of the Four Masters; and I cannot more gracefully conclude my story, than by acknowledging the degree to which I am his debtor for the materials out of which I have wrought it.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

THE LAST EARL OF DESMOND.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

[*From the ATHENÆUM, Dec. 2, 1854.*]

"This '*Last Earl of Desmond*' is extremely interesting, and written in a genial and spirited style;—it is easy to read,—there are no heavy or stiff descriptions of scenery or costume,—the characters deliver themselves like men of this world, and do not talk in imitation of the Elizabethan drama. The historical and political facts have been read up, and are well managed,—a dash of Irish drollery runs throughout, and the human interest is kept in the ascendant. The conclusion of the story, giving the Earl's imprisonment in the Tower, and his intercourse with Sir Walter Raleigh, is well drawn, and it has a touching and quiet interest which makes it the best portion of the book."

[*From the CRITIC, Dec. 1, 1854.*]

"The Author has constructed an ingenious plot, which he has embodied in a narrative of unusual spirit. The pages are never dull. The patrons of the CIRCULATING LIBRARIES enjoy the pictures that are presented to their mental vision.—*The Last Earl of Desmond* will find many to enjoy its vigorous pictures of Irish life in the seventeenth century."

[*From the JOHN BULL, Nov. 11, 1854.*]

"An affecting tale of love and jealousy is interwoven with the grievances of Ireland under the reign of Queen Elizabeth in this ably written historical romance. The social and political condition of the sister island, at the period in question, is portrayed in colours anything but flattering, while the gravity of the theme is constantly relieved by rich touches of Irish humour.

[*From the STANDARD, Nov. 14, 1852.*]

"This delightful romance transports us into a land almost unknown. The style of the tale is so terse as scarcely to admit of condensation. We are sensible what imperfect justice we do to this admirable romance, but its very excellence, consisting in the rapid succession of scenes and incidents which it presents, is the cause of our failing."

[*From the SUN, Dec. 7, 1854.*]

"This is a historical novel, and relates the fortunes of the *Last Earl of Desmond*. It is said to be the first work of the author. It displays none of the exaggerations which mark the style of young writers. The work certainly possesses the attractions of originality and conciseness, variety and interest."

[*From the DUBLIN EVENING MAIL, Nov. 13, 1854.*]

"There is surely no epoch in the history of any country more fertile in incidents of a romantic nature, than that comprised in the volumes before us. The historical incidents interwoven with the tale are well chosen, and make the perusal a work of profit and amusement. The scenes and events selected are certainly among the most interesting in the eventful era which the volumes are meant to illustrate. The descriptions of personal character, are as historically correct as it would be possible to make them, with a due regard to the embellishment of romance. The mind of the reader is held in unbroken interest while he scans the work from cover to cover, and we are much disappointed if its success is not as certain as it deserves to be. We hail the appearance of these volumes as the harbinger of a better era for Irish publishing business. If we mistake not, they are the precursors of a series of volumes from the same pen. All hail! Desmond."

[*From the DUBLIN EVENING POST, Nov. 11, 1854.*]

"The author of this work has had no common materials to handle, and from them he has woven a book of the highest interest. We arise from the perusal of the book with the same feeling that we arise from the contemplation of a picture by Turner, impressed by the fidelity to nature everywhere displayed, and conscious of the ruggedness of the genius that overpowers and charms us. We see a capability and freshness of mind, which will hereafter, we hope, do much for Irish Literature."

[*From the WARDER, Nov. 25, 1854.*]

"The difficulty of the task undertaken by the author of '*The Last Earl of Desmond*' can only be appreciated by those who have had occasion to lament the barrenness of our records, and the imperfect and tantalizing nature of the occasional lights thrown by contemporary writers upon the 'manners and customs' of the period. He has, notwithstanding this, produced a very interesting and richly coloured romance. He has broken new ground, and executed a very trying task with a success creditable alike to his fancy, judgment, and research. He has a very considerable facility in lyric composition; several specimens—religious, comic, and sentimental, we encounter in the course of the story."

[*From the CONSTITUTION, Dec. 5, 1854.*]

"We see in this day few books that for the interest they excite and the information they impart, can be compared with it. Did we not think it a production considerably surpassing ten out of a dozen of those which are extravagantly lauded in the columns of contemporaries, we should not

trouble ourselves to bespeak for it the attention of all who desire to have a livelier conception of the state of Ireland from 1599 to 1603 than they possess at present, and to obtain it under the guidance of a very agreeable pen. The reader may learn from it more of the condition of the country, than from graver tomes."

[*From the EXAMINER, Nov. 29, 1854.*]

"In these pages events come and go with the rapidity of a phantasmagoria; but the rapid and energetic style of the narrative is suitable to this 'abstract and brief chronicle of the time,' and despite the crowd of men and incidents, we follow the course of the story with undiminished interest to the close. It is written with great ability, and displays powers which we make little doubt will give the writer a very high *status* among the literary men of this country. He has a clear and graphic style, a large amount of varied information and scholarship, and a lively fancy. As a historical novel its chief merit lies in the fact that it presents clearly and vividly an idea of the times in which the tale is cast, and of the men whose lives and actions it speaks of. In general the historical portraits are better drawn than those touched off from imagination, and amongst the former we would give pre-eminence to that of the Earl himself, who makes a very noble and worthy hero. One still more difficult has also been very successfully treated, we mean Sir Walter Raleigh, who is a fellow-prisoner of the Earl in the Tower. The mixture of levity and philosophy, the combination of restless unsettled ambition with contemplative wisdom, which formed such striking traits in his character, have been very happily developed."

[*From the NORTHERN WHIG, Nov. 1854.*]

"We consider the account of Raleigh, at the conclusion of the story, while it was the most difficult part of the task which the daring writer took upon himself, to be by far the most happily executed. It is impossible, however, to refuse him credit for the ability with which he has kept up the interest of the narrative from the very beginning. Lord Bacon would, we are sure, have reported a deficiency in an important branch of literature, for which the author of '*The Last Earl of Desmond*' has shown that he possesses talents—we mean in 'the History of Ireland.' "

[*From the SOUTHERN REPORTER, Dec. 12, 1854.*]

"We have no history of Ireland, no high heroic drama in which we may see pass before us as a living representation of the stirring realities of the past. In the absence of such a work, many an Irishman will, perhaps, owe his first tolerably distinct idea of what the life of this nation was in one of its most singular epochs, to the author of '*The Last Earl of Desmond*'. The author has contrived a romance possessing much genuine historic value, and a very considerable share of that kind of poetic interest, which constitutes the principal charm of works of fiction. A writer like him should not soon abandon the rich field on which he has entered."

[*From the LONDONDERRY STANDARD, Nov. 30, 1854.*]

"Our author has displayed superior ability in the whole conduct of his narrative. He has evinced considerable learning, in combination with a

rich and active fancy, aided by descriptive powers of no common order, and has produced a book which is sure to be extensively read, from the popular and literary attractions with which its subjects has been invested."

[*From the LITERARY GAZETTE, Dec. 23, 1854.*]

"To write a really successful historical romance requires genius and art possessed by few authors. The more important the field of action and the more distinguished the personages, the more difficult it is to construct a fiction that will satisfy the reader. The time chosen for the present tale is at the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, between the years 1599 and 1603; and the scene is the province of Munster, in Ireland, with which, about that period, are associated the names of some of the greatest of England's worthies, especially Sir Walter Raleigh and Edmund Spenser. The discussions arising out of the poetical allusions in the 'Faerie Queene' will be read with much interest. The materials of the book are excellent and unusual. We have been much pleased both with the historical and literary episodes which form a prominent feature in the tale—a tale likely to be generally popular."



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